United Nations A/73/409–S/2018/859

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
26 September 2018

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General Assembly
Seventy-third session
Agenda items 97, 101 (b), (i) and (p), 102 (b) and 104

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East

General and complete disarmament:
Nuclear disarmament
Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons
Reducing nuclear danger

Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons

The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Letter dated 19 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I wish to draw your attention to the inflammatory statements by Benjamin Netanyahu, boasting about the nuclear weapons capability of the Israeli regime and threatening Iran with nuclear annihilation.

On Wednesday, 29 August 2018, Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking from the underground nuclear weapons development centre of this regime, Dimona, boasted about the contribution of "the Dimona project" to the security of Israel and how the establishment of that project and a massive acquisition of inhumane nuclear weapons have ensured the nuclear deterrent capability of Israel. In his speech, he then pointed to Iran and asserted that "on the military level, Israel will act with full force against Iran" and explicitly threatened Iran with nuclear aggression and annihilation.

Such an inflammatory statement against a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons constitutes a serious violation of international law, in particular Article 2 (4) of the Charter of the United Nations, and poses a real threat to international peace and security and, if unaddressed, undermines the credibility of the Treaty.

18-16050 (E) 081018

Please recycle

The Security Council, in its resolution 984 (1995), "recognizes further that, in case of aggression with nuclear weapons or the threat of such aggression against a non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, any State may bring the matter immediately to the attention of the Security Council ... and recognizes also that the nuclear-weapon State permanent members of the Security Council will bring the matter immediately to the attention of the Council and seek Council action", in accordance with the Charter.

In view of the above, the Security Council should fulfil its Charter-based responsibility as well as its commitment, under resolution 984 (1995), to strongly condemn the threat by the Israeli regime to use nuclear weapons against Iran, to compel Israel to abandon its illicit nuclear weapons and to urge it to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons without delay and place all of its unwarranted nuclear facilities under the full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

It is indisputable that such inhumane weapons in the hands of the Israeli regime, a regime with an unparalleled record of non-compliance with Security Council resolutions and a long, dark catalogue of crimes and atrocities, such as occupation, aggression, militarism, State terrorism and crimes against humanity, pose a uniquely grave threat to regional as well as international peace and security. Peace and stability cannot be achieved in the Middle East while the massive Israeli nuclear arsenal continues to threaten the region and beyond.

Members of the United Nations should not condone or tolerate such nuclear blackmail in the twenty-first century and should take resolute action to ensure the total elimination of all nuclear weapons as the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a victim of weapons of mass destruction, namely, chemical weapons in recent history, is firmly committed to pursuing the realization of a world free from weapons of mass destruction, in words and deeds.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 97, 101 (b), (i) and (p), 102 (b) and 104, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Gholamali **Khoshroo**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2018/860

Security Council

Distr.: General
24 September 2018
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 19 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith information bulletins from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic for 18 and 19 September 2018 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Nebenzia**

18-15755 (E) 240918 240918

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Annex to the letter dated 19 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (18 September 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported 13 incidents of gunfire in the following Governorates: 9 in Aleppo, 3 in Ladhiqiyah and 1 in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported three incidents of gunfire in Idlib Governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out one humanitarian operation: in Mazlum, Dayr al-Zawr Governorate, 450 food parcels with a total weight of 1.9 tons were distributed.

In total, 1,936 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,018.99 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (19 September 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The number of violations by illegal armed groups active in the Idlib de-escalation area has not decreased.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported 39 incidents of gunfire in the following Governorates: 26 in Ladhiqiyah, 10 in Aleppo and 3 in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has not reported any violations.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

The Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has not carried out any humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours.

In total, 1,936 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,019 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

United Nations A/72/146–S/2018/861

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
26 September 2018

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General Assembly
Seventy-second session
Agenda item 44
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 18 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 18 September 2018, addressed to you by the Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, İsmet Korukoğlu (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 44, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative

18-16019 (E) 031018

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 18 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 7 August 2018, addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative in New York and circulated as a document of the Security Council (S/2018/760), which contains false claims similar to those made in his previous letters. In order to set the record straight, I would like to bring the following to your kind attention.

Regarding the unfounded allegations of the so-called "infringements of international air traffic regulations" and "violations of the national airspace of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey", I wish to reiterate that flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus take place with the full knowledge and consent of the relevant authorities of the State, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or authority. The civil aviation authority of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the sole competent body to provide air traffic and aeronautical information services within its own national airspace, and notices to airmen are issued in accordance with article 3 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).

Similarly, the claim in the letter regarding the use of Turkish Cypriot ports is also baseless, given the fact that the Greek Cypriot administration has no jurisdiction or right of say over Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, this claim ignores the present realities on the ground, namely, the existence of two independent self-governing States on the island of Cyprus, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within its respective territory.

As to the repeated false allegations regarding Ercan Airport in the North, it should once again be underlined that the technologically up-to-date Ercan area control centre and airport in North Cyprus have been providing regular, reliable and safe air traffic services since the Greek Cypriot refusal in 1977 to provide air traffic services in the northern part of the island, in line with its policy of isolating the Turkish Cypriot people. Ever since, all flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have taken place with the full knowledge and permission of the Civil Aviation Department of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, over which it has full jurisdiction and control. Furthermore, I would like to stress that the allegation regarding the interference of radio frequencies is also totally baseless.

Moreover, the isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots, which the Greek Cypriot side attempts to perpetuate by encouraging the international community to deem all air and sea ports in Northern Cyprus "illegal", is in complete contravention of international law, as well as the call made by the then Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in his report to the Security Council dated 28 May 2004 (S/2004/437), in which he clearly stated: "I would hope they [members of the Security Council] can give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984)."

The legislation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on aeronautical safety meets all standards and recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization, ensuring aviation safety and security by regulating all aspects of civil aviation, which includes the operation of airports and the management of air traffic. All airports in Northern Cyprus are in full conformity with international standards, and necessary investments have been made to keep up with the developing technology. The number of air traffic controllers has been increased in accordance

with the growing number of flights over the years, and the Ercan area control centre is in regular and close cooperation with the Ankara area control centre in order to ensure the safe conduct of all flights in the region. In 2017 alone, the number of passengers who used Ercan Airport stood at 3,962,541, and this number is expected to reach 4,200,294 in 2018. Moreover, in 2017, 27,197 aeroplanes used Ercan Airport for arrival and departure and 189,787 aeroplanes used the Ercan advisory airspace, and these numbers are expected to reach 27,469 and 193,583, respectively, in 2018. In that regard, it must also be stressed that the Turkish Cypriot side is committed to upholding the highest standards in the field of air navigation safety, in full conformity with the Chicago Convention of 1944, and that it is ready to cooperate with the Greek Cypriot authorities on this very important issue.

Availing myself of the present opportunity, I would like to call upon the Greek Cypriot side to discontinue such counterproductive and outdated rhetoric and remind it that its counterpart is, and has always been, the Turkish Cypriot side, not Turkey.

(*Signed*) İsmet **Korukoğlu**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus

United Nations S/2018/862

Security Council

Distr.: General
18 September 2018

Original: English

Credentials of the alternate representatives of Kuwait on the Security Council

Report of the Secretary-General

Pursuant to rule 15 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the Secretary-General wishes to report that he has received a letter dated 18 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations stating that Mr. Meshari S. A. Y. al-Muzaini, Mr. Husain S. A. GH. H. Ebrahim, Mr. Abdulrahman Abdullah S. A. A. al-Shatti, Ms. Munera Fawaz D. S. al-Sabah and Ms. Marhab Khaled Saleh al-Dhefeery have been appointed alternate representatives of Kuwait on the Security Council.

In the opinion of the Secretary-General, that letter constitutes adequate provisional credentials.

18-15747 (E) 250918

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United Nations S/2018/863

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 September 2018
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 24 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith information bulletins from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic for 20 and 21 September 2018 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Nebenzia**

18-16053 (E) 270918 280918

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 24 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (20 September 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The number of violations by illegal armed groups operating in the Idlib de-escalation area has not decreased.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported 16 incidents of gunfire in the following Governorates: 9 in Ladhiqiyah, 6 in Aleppo and 1 in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has not reported any incidents.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out one humanitarian operation: in Haqlah, Aleppo Governorate, 450 food parcels with a total weight of 1.95 tons were distributed.

In total, 1,937 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,021 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (21 September 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The number of violations by illegal armed groups active in the Idlib de-escalation area has not decreased.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported 17 incidents of gunfire in the following Governorates: 8 in Aleppo, 7 in Ladhiqiyah, 1 in Hama and 1 in Idlib.

The Turkish representative office has not reported any violations.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out one humanitarian operation: in Humaymim, Ladhiqiyah Governorate, 50 sweets parcels and 50 jars of honey from Tula with a total weight of 0.1 tons were distributed.

In total, 1,938 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,021.04 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

United Nations S/2018/864

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 September 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 21 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instruction from my Government, I am writing to you in relation to the decree issued by the so-called president of the supreme political council, Mahdi al-Mashat, appointing four members to the Supreme Committee for Elections and Referendum on 17 September 2018. On the same day, President Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour issued a presidential directive invalidating the Houthi militias' decree. In this regard, I wish to draw your attention to the following:

- Recalling Security Council resolution 2201 (2015), in which the Council "Strongly deplores actions taken by the Houthis to take over Yemen's Government institutions, including acts of violence". In addition, recalling Security Council resolution 2216 (2015), in which the Council reaffirms its support for the legitimacy of the President of Yemen, Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, and reiterates its call to all parties and Member States to refrain from taking any actions that undermine the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen, and the legitimacy of the President of Yemen. In paragraph 1 (d) of the same resolution, the Council demands that Houthis "cease all actions that are exclusively within the authority of the legitimate Government of Yemen".

- On 8 September 2018, the Houthi militias continued to take actions that are exclusively within the authority of the legitimate Government of Yemen, violating the Security Council resolutions, specifically resolution 2216 (2015). In this regard, the militia replaced four Supreme Committee for Elections and Referendum judges with ones that are loyal to them. Such authority is only vested in the constitutionally elected president, Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, according to the Yemeni constitution and the three references, namely, the Gulf Cooperation Council Initiative and its implementation mechanism, the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

- The Supreme Committee for Elections and Referendum mandate is to administrate the elections processes in Yemen. The committee was last active in the 2012 presidential elections, in which President Hadi was elected by consensus. Thus, any act or ruling made by the judges under the coercion of the Houthi militias is considered as null and void.

- The Government of Yemen requests that the Security Council take serious measures to hold the perpetrators accountable, specifically the individuals and

entities responsible for the above-mentioned actions that threaten the peace, security and stability of Yemen.

The Government of Yemen further requests that the United Nations agencies and other relevant international organizations take all necessary actions to protect the properties, documents and capabilities of the Supreme Committee for Elections and Referendum, including the electronic and manual electoral records.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ahmed Awad **Binmubarak**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2018/865

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 September 2018

Original: English

Seventy-third session
Agenda item 70
Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Children and armed conflict in South Sudan

Report of the Secretary General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) and subsequent resolutions, is the second report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in South Sudan. It contains information on the six grave violations[1] against children that occurred between 1 October 2014 and 30 June 2018, the context in which they took place and identifies, where possible, the perpetrators.

The report documents alarming levels of all six grave violations against children committed by all parties to conflict throughout the reporting period, as well as the intensification of the impact on children as conflict progressively expanded from the greater Upper Nile region to the greater Equatoria region.

Recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence and abductions by all parties to conflict were documented at particularly worrisome levels. Numerous incidents of attacks against schools and hospitals were verified throughout the reporting period.

In addition, high levels of denial of humanitarian access to children were documented, levels which were exacerbated after the crisis of July 2016. That, in parallel with a worsening security situation, impeded the ability of the United Nations to document and respond to violations against children.

The report provides a series of recommendations to end and prevent grave violations against children in South Sudan and to improve their protection.

[1] Recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, abductions and denial of humanitarian access to children.

18-15894 (E) 121018

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) and subsequent resolutions on children and armed conflict, is the second report of the Secretary-General on the situation of children affected by armed conflict in South Sudan and covers the period from 1 October 2014 to 30 June 2018. It describes the trends and patterns of grave violations committed against children since the previous report (S/2014/884) and outlines challenges and progress in improving the situation of children since the May 2015 adoption of the conclusions of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (S/AC.51/2015/1). Perpetrators of grave violations are, where possible, identified in the present report. In that regard, in the annexes to my most recent annual report on children and armed conflict (S/2018/465), the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), pro-Taban Deng Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO), pro-Machar Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (pro-Machar SPLA-IO) and the White Army was listed for the recruitment and use of children. SPLA was also listed for killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals and the abduction of children, and pro-Machar SPLA-IO and pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO were listed for the killing and maiming of children.

2. The reporting period was marked by severe and persistent violations committed against children, including widespread killings, massive recruitment and use, sexual violence and abductions. The greater Upper Nile region witnessed gross human rights violations and abuses, including of children, as well as serious breaches of international humanitarian law, fuelled by inter-ethnic tensions, often emanating from historical disputes over land and resources and exacerbated by environmental change. The impact on children was devastating and had far-reaching consequences on individual lives and the social fabric.

3. Owing to the persistent denial of access, in particular in remote areas, resulting from bureaucratic impediments imposed mainly by the Government and security constraints, information collection was hampered throughout the reporting period and exacerbated after July 2016. That was illustrated by the increase in the number of denials of humanitarian access from 2016 (408) to 2017 (613), in parallel with a decrease in the number of verified violations from 2015 onwards and of incidents that the United Nations was unable to verify (1,008). It is therefore estimated that the violations committed against children were higher than reflected in the present report. However, the data herein provide an indication of the scale and nature of the grave violations against children in South Sudan.

II. Overview of political and security developments

A. 1 October 2014 to 30 June 2016

4. The conflict that erupted in December 2013 continued in the period from October 2014 to June 2016, predominately in Upper Nile, Unity and Jonglei. In 2014, several towns, including Bor, Bentiu and Malakal, were intermittently controlled by different factions. Fighting caused major displacements and sparked a humanitarian crisis. Unity witnessed some of the most persistent fighting, with spikes in October 2014 and in April to August 2015, mainly due to significant military offensives launched by SPLA. Other parts of the country were largely spared from armed conflict but affected by occasional intercommunal conflict and cattle rustling, which led to the killing, maiming, displacement and abduction of children.

5. Several rounds of mediation efforts by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in 2014 did not yield any significant agreement between SPLA and SPLA-IO, and the ceasefires obtained were consistently violated. In March 2015, IGAD-sponsored negotiations between SPLA and SPLA-IO were suspended and followed by a significant escalation of violence in April and May in the greater Upper Nile region. However, on 17 August 2015, an opening emerged with the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan and a ceasefire under the auspices of IGAD. The Agreement outlined steps towards a Transitional Government of National Unity and contained child protection provisions urging the parties to refrain from the "recruitment and/or use of child soldiers" and "acts and forms of sexual and gender-based violence" and called upon the parties to "ensure the immediate and unconditional release of (...) child soldiers who are under their command or influence". The Agreement resulted, in April 2016, in the return from exile and swearing in of Riek Machar as First Vice-President of South Sudan and in the inauguration of the Transitional Government of National Unity.

B. 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018

6. Although the Transitional Government of National Unity existed for a 30-month period, the lull in the conflict was short-lived as fighting broke out at the presidential palace during a meeting of the President and the First Vice-President in July 2016, which saw Riek Machar return into exile and his replacement by Taban Deng Gai as First Vice-President. Those developments resulted in fighting in Juba, Central Equatoria, between supporters of Salva Kiir and Riek Machar and in the fragmentation of SPLA-IO between Riek Machar and Taban Deng Gai. The July 2016 conflict also led to an expansion of the conflict from the greater Upper Nile region to the greater Equatoria region, which previously had been largely unaffected. Despite international calls for the Government to end atrocities against civilians and warnings that a process of ethnic cleansing could unfold in the country, offensives by SPLA and fighting with armed groups continued unabated. The country had almost plunged into famine by the end of 2016. The ensuing declaration of war by Riek Machar and a cabinet reshuffle by the President in favour of SPLA-IO members loyal to Taban Deng Gai further worsened the crisis.

7. Despite a unilateral commitment by Salva Kiir to a ceasefire in May 2017, it was quickly violated, including with attacks on the SPLA-IO stronghold of Pagak, Upper Nile, and ambushes along major roads in the greater Equatoria region. In that context, in June 2017, IGAD sought to reinvigorate negotiations by creating a high-level revitalization forum to, inter alia, discuss measures to restore a permanent ceasefire and to implement the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan.

8. The second session of the high-level resolution forum resumed in Addis Ababa in February 2018, amid condemnations by the African Union and Troika members of breaches of the ceasefire and patterns of violations, including sexual violence and child recruitment and use. The session concluded on 16 February without significant results. Following another round of talks in May 2018, a face-to-face meeting took place between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar in Khartoum, which resulted in the signing of the Khartoum Declaration of Agreement between Parties of the Conflict of South Sudan in June 2018.

9. In parallel, following clashes between SPLA and pro-Machar SPLA-IO in Unity, SPLA launched an offensive in southern Unity from April to May 2018, targeting opposition-controlled villages and committing gross violations and abuses of human rights, including forceful displacement, vast and indiscriminate killing and shelling, rape and sexual abuse and the burning and pillaging of villages, with a devastating

impact on children. On 13 July, the Security Council imposed an arms embargo on South Sudan, barring all States from providing weapons to the country until May 2019 (see Council resolution 2428 (2018)).

10. The conflict in South Sudan became the largest source of displacement in Africa, with 4.3 million people displaced, of whom 1.84 million were internally displaced and 2.48 million were refugees.[2] At the time of writing, more than 88,000 children had sought refuge in United Nations protection of civilians sites. Since 2013, more than one third of all schools have been attacked, and 2.4 million children have been deprived of education. That dramatic situation has been compounded by episodes of famine in parts of the country since 2016, and by epidemics of cholera, malaria and other illnesses that exerted a heavy toll on children.

III. Parties to conflict in South Sudan

11. During the reporting period, the full or partial integration of armed groups into SPLA and other Government security forces continued, including with the integration of the South Sudan Democratic Army-Cobra Faction (SSDA-CF) in 2015, as well as of the South Sudan National Liberation Movement (SSNLM) and pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO beginning in 2016. While SPLA was the main perpetrator of violations, other Government security forces and authorities played an active role in committing violations against children, including the South Sudan National Police Service (SSNPS), the South Sudan National Wildlife Service (SSNWS), the National Prison Service (NPS), the National Security Service (NSS) and the National Fire Brigade.

12. After July 2016, SPLA-IO splintered into two groups, namely pro-Machar SPLA-IO, with a leader in exile, and pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO, which sided with the Government. Despite the exile of Riek Machar, his group retained control of Pagak and several locations in the greater Upper Nile region.

13. Other armed groups splintered, disintegrated and re-emerged, often taking part in localized fighting, siding with either SPLA or SPLA-IO. For instance, the White Army, a loose coalition of community defence groups active mostly in the greater Upper Nile region, associated primarily with pro-Machar SPLA-IO, as did the National Salvation Front (NSF), led by Lieutenant-General Thomas Cirillo, who defected from SPLA. An SSDA-CF splinter group sided with NSF under the leadership of Adoch Agul against Government forces in the area of Pibor, Jonglei. The South Sudan People's Patriotic Front (SSPPF), based in Western Equatoria, and Johnson Olony's armed group also associated primarily with pro-Machar SPLA-IO in its stronghold in Upper Nile. The proliferation of parties to conflict increased the volatility of the conflict and spurred a demand for children in their ranks.

IV. Grave violations against children

14. In that context, alarming levels of all six grave violations were committed by all parties to conflict. Children were affected in multiple and often compounding ways, and large numbers of children were used to commit violations against other children and civilians during their association with parties to conflict.

15. During the reporting period, the United Nations verified a total of 1,235 incidents of recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual

[2] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "South Sudan: Humanitarian snapshot", July 2018. Available at https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-humanitarian-snapshot-july-2018.

violence and abductions, affecting 9,268 children (7,201 boys, 1,966 girls and 101 of unknown sex).[3] A total of 5,693 children were affected in the three last months of 2014 and in 2015, 1,630 in 2016, 1,398 in 2017 and 547 in the first half of 2018. In addition, the United Nations verified 1,496 denials of humanitarian access to children and 163 attacks on schools and hospitals. Furthermore, there were 965 incidents estimated to have affected more than 9,500 children that the United Nations was not able to verify. The great majority of verified incidents of violations took place in Unity (630), followed by Upper Nile (105), Jonglei (93), Central Equatoria (92), Western Bahr el-Ghazal (91), Western Equatoria (90), Warrap (64), Northern Bahr el-Ghazal (34), Eastern Equatoria (27) and Lakes (9).

16. Recruitment and use remained the most prevalent violation. Children were recruited in internally displaced person camps, in United Nations protection of civilians sites, in schools and in their own homes and communities. An enduring concern during the period under review was the targeting of children on the basis of their ethnic affiliation and for their alleged association with parties to conflict.

17. Grave violations against children peaked in 2015 owing to military offensives launched by SPLA in the greater Upper Nile region on areas controlled by SPLA-IO, followed by offensives in Central Equatoria in July 2016 and Eastern Equatoria in April 2017. The security situation was volatile and fighting persisted and intensified intermittently throughout the reporting period.

A. Recruitment and use

18. Recruitment and use of children by all parties to conflict remained a persistent violation over the reporting period. The United Nations verified 513 incidents, affecting a total of 5,723 children (5,320 boys and 403 girls), 2,948 of which were affected during the last three months of 2014 and in 2015, 1,122 in 2016, 1,221 in 2017 and 432 in the first half of 2018. In addition, 654 incidents of violations, affecting 7,220 children, were documented but remained unverified.

19. Of the children who were recruited and used, 2,437 children (43 per cent) were recruited and used by Government security forces, including SPLA (2,382 children, including 124 girls), SSNPS (49 boys), SSNWS (4 boys) and NPS (2 boys). With regard to armed groups, children were recruited and used by pro-Machar SPLA-IO (1,447 children, including 5 girls), pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO (801 children, including 46 girls), SSNLM (632 children, including 218 girls), Johnson Olony's armed group (133 boys), SSDA-CF (102 boys), the White Army (91 boys) and SSPPF (80 children, including 10 girls). Unity remained the epicentre of recruitment and use (247 incidents), followed by Upper Nile (67) and Jonglei (59).

20. The majority of children associated with armed forces and groups were used in support roles, including as cooks, porters, spies or bodyguards to senior commanders. A 13-year-old boy, who escaped pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO in Unity in March 2017, reported that boys were used to collect water and firewood, clean the barracks and cook. When they got tired and were unable to carry out their tasks, they were beaten and made to stand in the sun all day without food. Children associated with SPLA staffed checkpoints, rode in military vehicles and were used as bodyguards to commanders.

21. Children were also armed, trained and used in active combat. In April 2015 in Upper Nile, older boys associated with Johnson Olony's armed group were given

[3] The term "incident" describes an action by a party to conflict that leads to one or more grave violations. "Violations" or "cases" refer to each individual child or protected structure affected by an incident. A single incident may therefore result in multiple violations.

small arms and trained in combat, while younger children were used for support tasks such as cutting wood and fishing. Children were used to commit atrocities against civilians, including other children. In 2015, during a military offensive in Unity, one girl survivor recounted that eight boys, between 12 and 16 years of age, had killed her uncle. In that same offensive, 25 boys associated with SPLA, some as young as 12 years old, carried weapons, beat older people in the village and set houses on fire. A 15-year-old boy, who was abducted along with 20 other boys, and who subsequently escaped from SPLA, recounted that he had been ordered to kill all men and boys encountered during the Unity offensive.

22. Girls were also recruited and used and were observed in military uniforms, carrying weapons and manning checkpoints with adult soldiers. Girls who had escaped reported having been sexually abused and used for domestic chores. Girls were particularly affected by the military offensives in Unity in 2015, when they were used as sex slaves and to carry looted goods. In Leer County, Unity, in May 2015, a 17-year-old girl was abducted, beaten and raped for six days by different SPLA soldiers and used by SPLA soldiers to carry looted goods.

23. Children were frequently recruited in forcible mass recruitment exercises. In January 2017, the United Nations verified the mass recruitment of over 150 boys at a cattle market, which had been ordered by a Government official in Unity. The new recruits were provided weapons stolen or collected from older community members. In another instance, in January 2014, seven boys in Unity were forcibly abducted and recruited by pro-Machar SPLA-IO. The boys were taken to a military barrack, where they received one year of military training before being sent to the frontlines in Unity's oil fields. One 17-year-old boy managed to escape in December 2017.

24. Children were often recruited and used to boost numbers and to meet requirements set by military leaders. Reports were received of county commissioners affiliated with SPLA-IO in Unity recruiting children to meet quotas. For instance, in the counties of Leer and Mayendit, in Unity, between 250 and 500 children were recruited into pro-Machar SPLA-IO in March 2015 by local chiefs who had to meet quotas for new recruits. In addition, in April 2017, pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO soldiers forcibly recruited young people, including children, in Rubkona County, Unity, to boost their numbers. Poverty and lack of opportunities were also drivers of child recruitment and use. Several children stated in interviews that they had joined SPLA owing to poverty, since they were paid between 700 and 1,500 South Sudanese pounds per month (between 5 and 12 United States dollars) by SPLA.

25. Despite national laws prohibiting the recruitment and use of children, parties to conflict repeatedly argued that child recruitment and use was not illegal if children joined voluntarily. In March 2015, a SPLA deputy commander in Mayom County, Unity, stated that he was using boys as bodyguards to "keep them out of trouble". In a separate instance in Unity in March 2015, a SPLA-IO county commissioner argued that the local authorities did not consider the recruitment and use of children illegal because the children could not attend school and needed food, which was being provided to them by the armed group. Similarly, in January 2017, a commander aligned with pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO contended that children were voluntarily joining the group because they needed protection, food and clothing.

26. The recruitment and use of children was often connected to other grave violations. In Rubkona County, Unity, in April 2015, United Nations staff encountered a 14-year-old boy formerly associated with SPLA who had been injured by SPLA soldiers who shot him while he was attempting to escape. Similar incidents were verified of boys receiving lashes for misfiring their weapons, and in one incident in January 2017, a 10-year-old boy associated with SPLA was beaten by his commander for having fired his weapon during a patrol in Leer County, Unity.

27. Released children were also at risk of re-recruitment, in particular in the absence of long-term options for their reintegration. In Pibor, Jonglei, 21 boys previously released from SSDA-CF were used by the same group to fight SPLA in February 2016. In February 2017, the United Nations verified the re-recruitment of four boys by the SSDA-CF in Pibor.

28. From 2014 to 2016, the United Nations received unverified reports of cross-border recruitment of children by Sudanese armed groups, including the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/North and the Justice and Equality Movement, some allegedly in refugee settlements in Upper Nile.

Deprivation of liberty of children for their alleged association with armed groups

29. The United Nations verified eight cases of detention of children by SPLA (12 boys) and NSS (1 boy) for their alleged association with armed groups. There were reports of extrajudicial killings and ill-treatment of children while in detention. In March 2017, a 17-year-old boy who was arrested by SPLA in Western Bahr el-Ghazal for his alleged association with SPLA-IO was later found dead with multiple wounds.

B. Killing and maiming

30. The United Nations verified a total of 394 incidents (240 killings and 154 maimings), affecting 987 children (594 boys, 292 girls and 101 of unknown sex). Of the children involved, 669 were killed or maimed in the last three months of 2014 and in 2015, 179 in 2016, 93 in 2017 and 46 in the first half of 2018. In addition, 197 incidents of killing and maiming, affecting 864 children, were documented but not verified.

31. Government security forces were responsible for 79 per cent (776) of the total number of child casualties. Of those, 773 children (459 boys, 224 girls and 90 of unknown sex) were killed or maimed by SPLA; 2 boys by SSNPS and 1 boy by the National Fire Brigade. With regard to armed groups, the killing and maiming of 33 children (19 boys, 11 girls and 3 of unknown sex) were attributed to pro-Machar SPLA-IO; 11 to SSNLM (6 boys and 5 girls); 6 each to Johnson Olony's armed group (6 boys) and SSDA-CF (4 boys and 2 girls); 5 to pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO (4 boys and 1 girl); 4 boys to SSPPF; and 1 boy to the White Army. In addition, 50 children (31 boys and 19 girls) were affected by cross-fire between SPLA and pro-Machar SPLA-IO, and 95 child casualties were due to explosive remnants of war (57 boys, 30 girls and 8 of unknown sex). Most incidents took place in Unity (203), followed by Western Bahr el-Ghazal (56) and Central Equatoria (41).

32. The vast majority of children were killed or maimed while implicated in or affected by military operations carried out by SPLA, or during clashes with armed groups. Children were often caught in crossfire or directly targeted and summarily executed, including through close-range shooting. Children were killed or maimed as they were seeking safety in or while inside United Nations protection of civilians sites. Information was also received regarding children drowning while crossing rivers as they fled SPLA attacks.

33. At the height of the military offensives in the greater Upper Nile region in 2015, 118 verified incidents of killing and maiming occurred, affecting 488 children (248 boys, 160 girls and 80 of unknown sex). Civilians, including children, were targeted by all sides, often on the basis of their ethnic affiliation. Incidents that took place during the Unity military offensives were particularly egregious, with children beaten to death, hung from trees, thrown into burning houses, tied up, executed and run over

by military vehicles. In one incident in Upper Nile in September 2015, two boys approximately 7 years of age were found hanging from trees along with several women after an attack by SPLA. In June 2016, during fighting in Wau, Western Bahr el-Ghazal, 44 children were killed and 7 were maimed owing to their alleged support for opposition groups or when trying to escape SPLA forces. In October 2016, a number of civilians, including 23 children, were allegedly locked in a shipping container by SPLA in southern Unity, resulting in the death of all except 1 child.

34. Boys were specifically targeted, reportedly to prevent future counter-attacks. According to reports, during the May 2015 attacks in Koch County, Unity, soldiers had said that "boys would be killed and castrated and girls would be taken with the soldiers". Bodies of castrated boys were found by survivors on their way to the United Nations protection of civilians site in Unity and in other locations in southern Unity. In one instance in November 2015, a 5-year-old boy attempting to escape during an SPLA attack was captured and his throat slit owing to his gender.

35. Children were also killed and maimed in crossfire between SPLA and armed groups in the greater Equatoria region. In July 2016, the United Nations verified the killing of a 9-year-old girl in crossfire during a clash between SPLA and SSPPF in Yambio, Western Equatoria. In July 2016, in Juba, Central Equatoria, four children were killed in crossfire between SPLA and pro-Machar SPLA-IO, including a 15-year-old boy who was seeking refuge at a United Nations protection of civilians site. More reports of child casualties during fighting between SPLA and pro-Machar SPLA-IO in the greater Equatoria region, in particular in Central Equatoria, could not be verified owing to access constraints.

C. Rape and other forms of sexual violence

36. The United Nations verified 200 incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence, affecting 658 children (including 7 boys), 442 of whom were affected in the last three months of 2014 and in 2015, 142 in 2016, 55 in 2017 and 19 in the first half of 2018. The United Nations also received reports of 75 incidents, affecting 541 girls, that could not be verified. Close to 75 per cent (148) of the total number of cases involved gruesome gang rapes. The full scale of sexual violence affecting children is believed to be underreported, in particular against boys, owing to fear of stigmatization and reprisals and to the lack of adequate support services and avenues for accountability. The decrease in verified incidents from 2016 (142) to 2017 (55) is ascribed to the increasingly restricted access to conflict-affected areas.

37. Of the total number of affected children, 95 per cent (629) were subjected to sexual violence by Government security forces, including SPLA (615 children; 608 girls and 7 boys), SSNPS (9 girls), NSS (2 girls), SSNWS (2 girls) and NPS (1 girl). With regard to armed groups, the rape of 15 girls was attributed to SSPPF; 10 girls to pro-Machar SPLA-IO; 3 girls to pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO; and 1 girl to SSNLM. Most incidents took place in Unity (98), followed by Central Equatoria (34) and Western Equatoria (18).

38. Continued fighting and widespread indiscriminate attacks on civilians exposed children to sexual violence. The use of sexual violence and rape was systematic and employed as a tactic of war with ethnic and political undertones during military operations and in ambushes on civilians fleeing to United Nations protection of civilians sites. As mentioned in the section on killing and maiming, boys were also targeted through castration and sexual mutilation. The use of sexual violence and rape in military operations expanded as fighting erupted in the greater Equatoria region in 2016 and 2017.

39. Sexual violence was used as a form of collective punishment to instill fear and humiliation within communities. Numerous examples of that pattern were verified, including in Unity, in May 2015, when 95 children, including 4 boys, were sexually abused or raped during military offensives. In another incident in Unity, in October 2015, a woman was tied to a tree by SPLA soldiers after they had killed her husband, forcing her to watch as her 15-year-old daughter was raped by at least 10 soldiers. In August 2016, 10 girls and 2 older women who were fleeing fighting in Leer County, Unity, and heading to the United Nations protection of civilians site in Bentiu, Unity, were stopped on the way there by some 20 SPLA soldiers and taken into the bush and raped repeatedly. Similarly, SPLA soldiers raped or gang-raped 34 girls and 30 women from villages in Koch County, Unity, in December 2015 and January 2016. In April 2018, sexual violence was used extensively during indiscriminate attacks on villages by SPLA soldiers and armed youth in Unity.

40. Children were also raped when performing domestic chores, when venturing out of United Nations protection of civilians sites and at checkpoints. For instance, in Wau, Western Bahr el-Ghazal, SPLA soldiers attempted to rape three girls collecting firewood outside a United Nations protection of civilians site in November 2016 but were stopped by United Nations peacekeepers. During fighting in Juba, Central Equitoria, between July and December 2016, 12 girls were raped by SPLA soldiers at military checkpoints or near military headquarters.

41. Rape and other forms of sexual violence often occurred in the context of other grave violations, such as recruitment and use or abduction. In Yambio, Western Equatoria, in January 2018, a 12-year-old girl was abducted with her mother by pro-Machar SPLA-IO combatants and repeatedly raped by a combatant, to whom she was forcibly married. The girl and her mother managed to escape after three months in captivity.

42. The sexual exploitation and abuse of children by United Nations peacekeepers was a serious protection concern in South Sudan, as documented in my report on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (A/72/751 and A/72/751/Corr.1).

D. Attacks on schools and hospitals

43. The United Nations verified a total of 163 attacks against schools (67) and hospitals (96), of which 69 took place in the three last months of 2014 and in 2015, 33 in 2016, 50 in 2017 and 11 in the first half of 2018. In addition, 69 attacks on schools and 25 on hospitals and medical personnel were documented but not verified. Attacks on schools affected the access to education of tens of thousands of children during the reporting period. Most incidents of attacks on schools and hospitals took place in Unity (34), followed by Eastern Equatoria and Upper Nile (28).

44. SPLA was responsible for almost 60 per cent of the attacks on schools (39), pro-Machar SPLA-IO for 10 incidents and pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO for 3 incidents. Eleven attacks resulted from crossfire between SPLA and pro-Machar SPLA-IO and four from crossfire between SPLA and SSDA-CF.

45. SPLA was responsible for 64 per cent of the attacks on hospitals (61), pro-Machar SPLA-IO for 13 incidents, pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO for 4 incidents, SSPPF for 3 incidents and NSF for 1 incident. Ten attacks on hospitals resulted from crossfire between SPLA and armed groups. Four incidents were attributed to unknown armed elements.

46. Attacks on schools and hospitals, included looting, vandalism and destruction of facilities, attacks and threats of attacks on students and protected personnel, often

occurred during military offensives. In February 2016, three health facilities were attacked and destroyed at the United Nations protection of civilians site in Malakal, Upper Nile, during an attack by SPLA and allied armed youth. In the same attack, three schools were destroyed. In July 2016, during fighting between SPLA and pro-Machar SPLA-IO in Juba, Central Equatoria, one hospital and three health clinics were looted of medical supplies by SPLA soldiers, and two schools were damaged and looted by pro-Machar SPLA-IO.

47. Schools and hospitals were also affected as the fighting spread throughout the greater Equatoria region. In April 2017, 11 schools and 6 health facilities were vandalized and looted by SPLA during an offensive in Pajok, Eastern Equatoria. In one attack, food to feed primary schoolchildren was stolen and two teachers were killed. SPLA affiliated elements were later seen selling equipment from the hospital. In March 2017, five teachers from three different primary schools and two health-care workers in Unity were forcibly recruited by pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO.

48. A total of 103 cases of military use of schools were verified, 47 in the last three months of 2014 and in 2015, 21 in 2016, 22 in 2017 and 13 in the first half of 2018. The military use of schools affected access to education for over 32,500 children. Government security forces were responsible for 81 cases (79 per cent), with SPLA responsible for 69 cases, and other Government security forces and county authorities for 12. With regard to armed groups, 16 schools were used by pro-Machar SPLA-IO, 4 by pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO, and 1 by SSDA-CF. One school that was being used by the Ethiopian National Defense Forces in May 2016 in Jonglei was vacated after two weeks upon notification by the United Nations. In addition, the United Nations verified seven cases of military use of hospitals by SPLA.

49. Schools and hospitals were used as military bases and sleeping quarters by parties to conflict. During a visit to a school used by SPLA in Eastern Equatoria in November 2015, the United Nations observed school benches being used by soldiers as firewood. As at 30 June 2018, 85 schools had been vacated, many of which had been occupied prior to the reporting period, while 35 schools remained in military use.

E. Abduction

50. The United Nations verified 128 incidents of abduction, affecting 1,900 children (1,280 boys and 620 girls). Of those children, 1,634 were abducted in the last three months of 2014 and in 2015, followed by 187 in 2016, 29 in 2017 and 50 in the first half of 2018. In addition, the United Nations received reports of 82 abductions, affecting more than 1,000 children, that were unverified. Most incidents occurred in Unity (82), followed by Western Equatoria (15) and Upper Nile (9).

51. The pro-Machar SPLA-IO was the main perpetrator, responsible for abducting 963 children (938 boys and 25 girls), representing 51 per cent of the total. As for Government forces, 745 children (203 boys and 542 girls) were abducted by SPLA, 149 (96 boys and 53 girls) by SSPPF, 35 (all boys) by Johnson Olony's armed group, 6 (all boys) by pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO, and 1 boy each by SSNLM and SSDA-CF.

52. Abduction was primarily used as a tactic for the recruitment of children into armed forces and groups. In February 2015, 36 boys were abducted for recruitment from Wau Shilluk, Upper Nile, by Johnson Olony's armed group. Elements of the group went house to house and took any male child above the age of 12. In Rubkona County, Unity, in April 2015, 21 boys were abducted from a local market and forced to join SPLA, some of whom were assigned as bodyguards to a commander. In September 2015, in Western Equatoria, SSPPF abducted 30 boys and forcibly brought them to training camps. On 4 May 2017, two 15-year-old boys were abducted during

the night in Upper Nile by pro-Machar SPLA-IO soldiers. The two boys, who were being held in captivity along with five other boys of the same age, managed to escape.

53. Children were also abducted for recruitment from schools. In several instances, parents kept their children home out of fear that they would be abducted while in class or on their way to school. In October 2015, the abduction of 29 boys and 26 girls by SSPPF from a school in Yambio, Western Equatoria, negatively affected school attendance in the area.

54. The 620 girls verified as having been abducted were used for several functions, including for sexual purposes. SPLA was the main abductor (542 girls). During military offensives in Unity in June 2015, seven girls were abducted during an attack on their village in Koch County, Unity, and were raped while being transported to Mayom County, Unity. One girl was killed when she refused to continue the journey. In February 2018, 11 girls on their way to collect firewood in Wester Bahr el-Ghazal were abducted by pro-Machar SPLA-IO. Two girls who managed to escape recounted that they had been sexually abused by soldiers. Two girls abducted by pro-Machar SPLA-IO in May 2018 in Mvolo, Western Equatoria, were held for seven days, during which they were sexually abused, before being released.

F. Denial of humanitarian access

55. The United Nations verified 1,496 incidents of denial of humanitarian access, 295 in the last three months of 2014 and in 2015, 408 in 2016, 783 in 2017 and 10 in the first half of 2018. Some 84 per cent of the incidents were attributed to Government authorities (1,120), including SPLA (512), state and county authorities (195), NSS (164), SSNPS (156) and other government institutions (93). Incidents were also attributed to armed groups, including pro-Machar SPLA-IO (181), SSPPF (8), pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO (7), SSNLM (6), the White Army (3) and NSF (1). The United Nations was unable to identify the perpetrators of 170 incidents, often owing to lack of access resulting from active hostilities. Most of the verified incidents occurred in Central Equatoria (363), followed by Unity (235) and Jonglei (191).

56. Cases of denial of humanitarian access to children doubled between 2014 and 2017. Most of the denials were caused by administrative and bureaucratic impediments to gaining access to areas to deliver humanitarian aid to children or resulted from security constraints on gaining access to conflict-affected areas. That type of denial increased after fighting erupted in Juba, Central Equatoria, in July 2016, which hampered the ability of humanitarian workers to promptly and safely reach children in need.

57. Humanitarian workers were also harassed, assaulted, abducted, killed and injured while providing humanitarian assistance. In August 2016, a child protection worker was shot and killed when fighting broke out between SPLA and pro-Machar SPLA-IO in Mayendit County, Unity. In March 2017, six child protection workers were killed in an ambush by SPLA while driving from Juba, Central Equatoria, to Pibor, Jonglei, where they were to implement reintegration activities for children released by SSDA-CF. In June 2017, humanitarian workers came under attack by pro-Machar SPLA-IO in Lainya County, Central Equatoria, while delivering services, resulting in the suspension of humanitarian aid.

58. In addition, during and after the fighting in Juba, Central Equatoria, in July 2016, humanitarian supplies were looted and United Nations staff were harassed and intimidated. In one incident, a UNICEF water-truck convoy heading to a United Nations protection of civilians site to refill empty water reservoirs was diverted to an SPLA compound by SPLA soldiers. In another example, in August 2017, SPLA

soldiers looted material provided by the United Nations for child protection programmes in Maiwut County, Upper Nile.

V. Challenges and progress in addressing grave violations against children

A. Engagement with parties to conflict to end and prevent grave violations, including through the implementation of action plans

59. During the period under review, the United Nations continued to engage with parties to conflict to advocate for the ending and prevention of grave violations against children and for the adoption and implementation of action plans.

60. With regard to the revised action plan signed by the Government in 2012, its implementation was seriously disrupted by the ongoing conflict and persistently high levels of violations, mainly perpetrated by SPLA and other Government forces. However, dialogue between SPLA and the United Nations was maintained within the framework of the action plan, in particular at the State level. United Nations engagement with the Government, in particular SPLA, was disrupted, however, by the July 2016 crisis.

61. Following the signature of the recommitment agreement to the revised action plan in June 2014, the Government and the United Nations jointly endorsed a work plan to operationalize its implementation in August 2014 and created a national technical committee to oversee its application. The technical committee agreed to joint assessments by the United Nations and the Government to verify the military use of schools by Government forces, which led to 27 schools being vacated by Government forces between February and June 2015. The technical committee also advocated for the release and reintegration of children recruited and used by SSDA-CF in Pibor, Jonglei, in 2015, which resulted in the release of 1,875 children. A high-level committee created in October 2014 to serve as a forum to engage on child protection issues remained inactive owing to a lack of commitment by the Government.

62. As part of its outreach activities, until the July 2016 crisis, the United Nations supported the translation and dissemination of the revised action plan, along with flyers and posters with key child protection messages, across South Sudan. To reach the local population and raise awareness on the prohibition of child recruitment and use, the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, SPLA child protection focal points and the United Nations collaborated on radio outreach projects with Radio Miraya of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and community radio stations in Yei, Central Equatoria, and Malakal, Upper Nile. However, apart from those activities, key elements of the agreed workplan, in particular parts related to accountability, remained largely unimplemented, and the recruitment and use of children, as well as other grave violations, continued.

63. The United Nations started to re-engage with SPLA on child protection in 2017, which resulted in the appointment of new SPLA child protection focal points to SPLA headquarters in Juba, Central Equatoria. To strengthen child protection capacity within SPLA, the United Nations and the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission carried out two training of trainers workshops in Juba in 2017 for 70 officers from the SPLA child protection unit. SPLA child protection focal points, in turn, facilitated training programmes within SPLA. High-ranking SPLA officers were also used as facilitators during training sessions organized by the United Nations in Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei and Unity.

64. In February 2018, following sustained engagement, the Ministry of Defence and SPLA leadership agreed to provide unhindered access for the United Nations and the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission to undertake joint visits to all military barracks to screen and release children associated with SPLA. However, owing to limited resources, only one joint verification mission took place, in February 2018. In June 2018, the United Nations conducted a two-day workshop for 50 SPLA senior officers from the 10 SPLA divisions at SPLA headquarters on the implementation of the action plan, prevention efforts and accountability for child rights violations by the military.

65. With regard to armed groups, following the commitment made by Riek Machar to my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict in May 2014, in-country dialogue was initiated between the United Nations and SPLA-IO in the course of 2015. Between October and December 2015, the United Nations engaged with 39 senior SPLA-IO officers on the action plan process, which resulted in the signature by Riek Machar on 26 December 2015 of an action plan with the United Nations to end and prevent the recruitment and use as well as the killing and maiming of children. However, despite close engagement with SPLA-IO on the release of children from its ranks, prospects were interrupted in July 2016, with the subsequent splintering of SPLA-IO and the exile of Riek Machar, allowing violations to continue at high levels of violations.

66. Following the appointment of Taban Deng Gai as First Vice-President in July 2016, and in the context of the progressive integration of pro-Taban Deng forces into SPLA, the United Nations engaged in dialogue with pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO on the release of children associated with the armed group. In August 2017, verification and age-assessment exercises were undertaken in Pibor, Jonglei, by the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and the United Nations. At the end of 2017, Taban Deng Gai acknowledged the presence of children in his group, committed to their release and nominated a child protection focal point to liaise with the United Nations. A total of 468 children were subsequently identified by the United Nations during screenings between August 2017 and March 2018 in Jonglei and Western Equatoria, 314 of whom were released in 2018.

67. In January 2018, the Parliament passed the Civil Registry Act which will, inter alia, render birth registration systematic. However, the Act has yet to be signed into law by the President.

B. The release of children and programmatic response to grave violations against children

68. Engagement by the United Nations and the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission with armed forces and groups led to the release of 2,740 children between January 2015 and June 2018. That total included 1,875 children (1,870 boys and 5 girls) from SSDA-CF, 484 children (302 boys and 182 girls) from SSNLM, 314 children (285 boys and 29 girls) from pro-Taban Deng SPLA-IO, 27 boys from SPLA, 25 boys from pro-Machar SPLA-IO, 8 children (5 boys and 3 girls) from NSF and 7 boys from SSNWS. In addition, the United Nations verified a total of 163 children (158 boys and 5 girls) who had escaped or been spontaneously released by parties to conflict. Many of the releases occurred in the context of the integration of armed groups into SPLA.

69. The children received interim care, family tracing, reunification, psychosocial support and education services, along with other services, provided by the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supported by UNICEF. Released children were assisted

alongside other vulnerable children in their communities of return to prevent resentment, minimize pull factors, and promote acceptance by families and communities. UNICEF and NGO partners also responded to sexual violence cases by providing psychosocial and medical support to survivors, establishing safe spaces for women and girls, training service providers and supporting the development of referral mechanisms. However, the reintegration of children who had been released or escaped was hampered by limited resources, thus increasing the risk of re-recruitment.

C. Legal framework and accountability

70. South Sudan ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in January 2015. The Optional Protocols thereto, in particular the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, have not been ratified.

71. As noted in my previous report, credible efforts by parties to conflict, in particular the Government, to hold perpetrators of grave violations against children accountable, remained largely absent. Domestic laws were not systematically enforced, partly owing to resource constraints or infrastructure challenges, but also to a lack of political will. Provisions of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan relating to transitional justice, accountability, reconciliation and healing were not implemented, and progress on the creation of the African Union-mandated hybrid court is slow. Against a backdrop of large-scale grave violations against children and other atrocity crimes committed during the period under review, perpetrators of grave violations continue to benefit from a climate of widespread impunity.

VI. Observations and recommendations

72. I am dismayed by the scale and brutality of grave violations committed against children in South Sudan. I am especially alarmed by the rampant levels of grave violations committed by Government security forces, in particular SPLA. I urge all parties to conflict to immediately halt the violations and abide by their obligations under domestic legislation as well as international humanitarian and human rights law.

73. I condemn the widespread recruitment and use of children by all parties and call upon them to immediately cease that practice and release and hand over all children to civilian child protection actors for their reintegration into their communities.

74. I am alarmed by the pervasive use of sexual violence against children employed by all parties to conflict and call upon the Government to enforce and strengthen the legal framework and ensure that adequate and gender-sensitive services are provided to the survivors, including access to health care, psychosocial support and education.

75. The prevalence of impunity in South Sudan is of grave concern. In that regard, I urge the Government to swiftly address the lack of accountability and to take the measures necessary to ensure that perpetrators among all ranks of its security forces and authorities are held accountable.

76. The denial of humanitarian access to children seriously hampered the ability of the United Nations and partners to respond to grave violations against children. I urge all parties to allow rapid and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance to children.

77. I urge all parties to expedite the implementation of the action plans that they have signed with the United Nations and to allow access for the United Nations to assess compliance and progress, as well as to monitor and report on grave violations against children.

78. Taking note of the recent provision of access to the United Nations to SPLA barracks for the screening of children, as well as the fruitful cooperation on the release of children and on training activities, I call upon the Government to swiftly engage with the United Nations to revise the existing action plan into a comprehensive action plan that addresses all six grave violations endured by the children of South Sudan. I also urge the Government to include the criminalization of the six grave violations in the upcoming review of the Penal Code and to expedite the signing into law of the Civil Registry Act. Moreover, I encourage the Government to prioritize the prevention of grave violations, including through a national conference on children and armed conflict, and in that regard to collaborate with my Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict following her visit to South Sudan in September 2018.

79. I welcome the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and seek the Government's accession to its Optional Protocols, in particular that on the involvement of children in armed conflict. I also encourage the Government to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration, the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (Paris Principles) and the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers.

80. I call upon all parties to reinforce their efforts to reach peace by implementing the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan and ensuing commitments, including the provisions on the protection of children. I urge the parties to conflict, as well as the Security Council, the African Union and IGAD, to ensure that issues related to the protection of children and accountability are central to any future political settlement, in line with Council resolution 2427 (2018).

81. While welcoming the release of children, I am very concerned by the severe lack of funding for long-term sustainable reintegration programmes for children formerly associated with armed forces and groups, thus increasing the risk of re-recruitment. I encourage the donor community to increase their funding for sustainable, timely and appropriate reintegration and rehabilitation assistance to children in South Sudan, in line with resolution 2427 (2018).

82. I reiterate my commitment to preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse by all United Nations personnel. In response to the allegations that have been brought to my attention, I urge the Member States concerned to conduct thorough and prompt investigations, which the United Nations stands ready to support.

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Situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2423 (2018), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2019 and requested me to report on a quarterly basis on its implementation, focusing on progress in taking forward the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali (see S/2015/364 and S/2015/364/Add.1) and the efforts of MINUSMA to support it. The present report contains updates with regard to major developments in Mali since the issuance of my previous report (S/2018/541).

II. Major political developments

2. The presidential elections, which culminated with the re-election of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, dominated the reporting period. Signatory parties made some progress in the implementation of the Agreement, including the nomination of interim authorities at the district level, the creation of municipalities for the Ménaka and Taoudenni regions, and the adoption of the national security sector reform strategy.

A. Implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali

3. On 25 June 2018, the Agreement Monitoring Committee held its twenty-sixth session to assess, inter alia, the progress made in the implementation of the road map adopted on 22 March. Participants expressed concern over the lack of progress in establishing interim authorities at the district level and in operationalizing the mixed units of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in Kidal and Timbuktu ahead of the 29 July presidential elections, and called upon the parties to create conditions conducive to a credible electoral process.

4. On 5 July, the Mission concluded a three-day event focusing on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, during which women from all regions of the country met with senior government and United Nations officials. Participants identified, inter alia, ensuring the security of populations, including women and children, and facilitating women's participation in peacebuilding processes as priorities. Also in July, 45 women from

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the signatory parties and civil society participated in a workshop organized by the High Representative of the President for the peace process, MINUSMA and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), during which a women-led and independent consultative forum was created to monitor the implementation of the Agreement.

Political and institutional measures

5. As requested by the Security Council in its resolution 2423 (2018), the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, visited Mali from 31 August to 5 September and discussed with the Mission's senior leadership the draft outline of the pact for peace, which had been drafted after consultations with the Government and signatory movements. The pact for peace builds on the road map adopted on 22 March and the benchmarks for monitoring the implementation of the Agreement. It is aimed at renewing the commitment of the signatory parties to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement, as well as complementing the ongoing peace efforts and embracing longer-term objectives.

6. On 27 June, following consultations with the local communities, the Government adopted legislation creating 63 territorial collectivities in the Ménaka and Taoudenni regions, which should strengthen decentralized governance and facilitate the provision of basic administrative services at the local level.

7. On 26 July and 8 August, following extensive negotiations between the signatory parties and supported by the Mission's good offices, the Government appointed officials to serve as members of the interim administrations of 21 of the 24 districts in the northern regions.

8. On 20 June, the Council of Ministers appointed 72 administrators, including 5 women. As at 31 August, 31 per cent of civil administrators were present at their duty stations in the northern regions and in the Mopti region. A temporary increase in the proportion of civil administrators redeployed in the northern and central regions to 42 per cent was noted during the electoral period. Five out of six governors and 16 out of 32 prefects were present at their respective duty stations. In preparation for the elections, the Government deployed five prefects to Kidal, one of whom remained deployed after the elections. Since the previous reporting period, there had been a slight increase in the percentage of appointed judicial and prison officials deployed in northern and central Mali. As at 5 September, 67.5 per cent of judicial officials and 78 per cent of penitentiary officials in the north, and 94.5 per cent and 95.5 per cent, respectively, in the Mopti region, were present at their appointed posts, although insecurity caused absenteeism and the continued relocation of some staff.

9. With funding from the Government, regional interim administrations implemented a number of projects to strengthen basic services, social cohesion and economic recovery in all five northern regions. The projects included the rehabilitation of a water supply system and the construction of two markets in the Kidal region, as well as the construction of six dairy farms and a gum arabic production factory in Taoudenni. In June, the interim administration of Timbuktu launched a $250,000 project to rehabilitate Lake Horo to improve food security in the region and prevent conflicts between farmers and herders by demarcating pastoral space.

10. On 31 May, the Council of Ministers adopted a law on national understanding that allows for the reintegration of those who were responsible for crimes committed in the context of events related to the crisis that began in 2012, but have expressed genuine repentance. The law does not apply to those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, rape and any other crimes deemed imprescriptible. It offers compensation for and public assistance to victims.

11. On 28 August, the Council of Ministers adopted a decree convening the electoral college and announcing that parliamentary elections would be held on 28 October and 18 November. On 14 September, the Government of Mali announced that the elections would be postponed until 25 November and 16 December, respectively.

Defence and security measures

12. On 6 July, the National Council for Security Sector Reform adopted the national security sector reform strategy, which sets forth a national vision based on the principles of inclusiveness and representativeness of the security sector in accordance with the Agreement. The Mission continued to work with the signatory parties on the development of the security sector reform action plan, the national vision for the reconstitution and redeployment of the Malian defence and security forces, and a conceptual framework for the territorial police. MINUSMA supported building the community policing skills of the national police in the Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions.

13. The good offices of MINUSMA continued to support the implementation of priority defence and security measures as set out in the road map adopted on 22 March. In Kidal and Timbuktu, the first companies of the mixed units of the Operational Coordination Mechanism are being established and are currently at half their expected numbers. The mixed units in Gao, which continued to face challenges, including a lack of heavy weapons, were not able to provide security during the electoral period. As at 1 September, 346 elements from signatory parties were registered in the newly constituted mixed units in Kidal and Timbuktu.

14. In January 2018, the signatory parties agreed on integration criteria and quotas for internal security and civil services; however, they had yet to agree on integration quotas for the reconstituted armed forces and other uniformed services. The inability of the signatory parties to reach such an agreement continued to delay the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

15. In late May, the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission, supported by MINUSMA, completed the campaign for the pre-registration of combatants. The Commission also initiated the registration of non-signatory armed groups in the Mopti region. Security enhancements for seven of the eight cantonment sites were completed on 15 August. Cantonment sites have stood ready to receive combatants since 2016.

16. On 26 July, the Mission completed the rehabilitation of the inspectorate of defence and security services buildings in Bamako, as well as in Kati and Sénou, Koulikoro region, to help to promote the democratic oversight of Malian forces. In addition, MINUSMA provided office equipment and training in archiving for five inspectors of the armed forces and internal security institutions and trained 100 members of civil society on security sector reform.

17. MINUSMA did not observe ceasefire violations or instances of heavy-weapons movements by the signatory armed groups during the reporting period.

B. Presidential elections

18. The period leading up to the presidential elections of 29 July was marked by some political tensions and incidents. On 2 June, several political opposition leaders staged a demonstration in Bamako, despite a ban by the authorities, to demand transparent presidential elections and equal access to public media. During the dispersal of the demonstration by the national police, 16 demonstrators and one police officer were injured. This was a regrettable development that I immediately

condemned, calling for calm and calling upon the Government to ensure the protection of fundamental human rights. In an effort to reduce political tensions and promote a constructive dialogue, my Special Representative, in collaboration with the Head of the African Union Mission for Mali and the Sahel and the Permanent Representative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Mali, held meetings with the political opposition parties and senior government officials. Following the meetings, and with the authorization of the Government, the political opposition parties planned another march, which was held peacefully on 8 June.

19. The Constitutional Court validated 24 candidatures for the presidential elections. The campaign, which ran from 7 to 27 July, was generally peaceful despite some security incidents. Four of the 24 candidates, including President Keita, campaigned in the city of Kidal. In the last week of the electoral campaign, several candidates cited anomalies in the electoral process, including the existence of a parallel voter registry with fictitious voters, "ghost" polling stations and pre-cast ballots in favour of the incumbent. Following calls for dialogue by my Special Representative and the international community, the Prime Minister of Mali, Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga, met on 28 July with candidates to reduce tensions, and, consequently, annulled the instructions on proxy voting. He agreed to the presence of 10 observers from national non-governmental organizations, along with international observation missions in the compilation centres. The Prime Minister called on all candidates to appoint two members of their teams to confirm the integrity of the national voter register.

20. On 29 July, the first round of the presidential elections was held in a generally peaceful atmosphere, although 3.8 per cent of polling stations (871 out of 23,041), including in Mopti (444 stations) did not open because of lack of security or inaccessibility. On 31 July, several candidates signed a declaration denouncing irregularities in the electoral process and stating their intention to reject fraudulent electoral results. On 2 August, the Government published the preliminary results of the first round of voting, revealing that President Keita and Soumaila Cissé, received the majority of votes cast, with a turnout of 43.06 per cent. Ten presidential candidates filed 23 petitions with the Constitutional Court to contest the results and to request the removal of six judges of the Court for perceived bias. On 6 August, 18 candidates accused the Government of electoral fraud, and on the following day they organized a meeting at which they demanded a recount of the votes and the publication of results by polling stations. On 8 August, the Constitutional Court rejected all petitions and proclaimed the final results, in which President Keita received 41.70 per cent of the votes cast, followed by Soumaila Cissé, with 17.78 per cent. The Court confirmed that the final voter turnout had been 42.7 per cent.

21. As no candidate had received an absolute majority, a run-off election was held on 12 August. In an improvement compared with the first round, 2.1 per cent of polling stations did not open (493 out of 23,041) although some security incidents were reported (see below). The improvement was due in part to a reorganization of the deployment of approximately 6,000 Malian defence and security forces, with the support of MINUSMA. On 16 August, the Government published the preliminary results, announcing President Keita's victory. The following day, Mr. Cissé publicly rejected the provisional results. After appeals for calm and respect for the rule of law by the international community, Mr. Cissé agreed to rely solely on the available political and legal mechanisms to challenge the election results. On 20 August, the Constitutional Court confirmed that President Keita had obtained 67.16 per cent of the votes cast, against 32.84 per cent for Mr. Cissé, with a voter turnout of 34.42 per cent. The Court also rejected 16 legal complaints.

22. Although they noted some irregularities, national and international observers, including the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union and the International

Organization of la Francophonie, found that the elections had been held under satisfactory conditions and requested that the Government implement corrective measures to improve the transparency and credibility of the elections.

23. MINUSMA supported the electoral process by providing logistical support and technical assistance to the electoral bodies and other stakeholders. Support included the transportation of 182 tons of electoral materials to Mopti and the five northern regions and hiring 64 national electoral assistants. The Mission provided election-related transportation for 1,840 persons, including interested presidential candidates, to Mopti and the five northern regions. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its $5 million basket fund, funded electoral activities such as the training of polling agents, outreach and sensitization. The United Nations supported efforts to increase women's participation in the electoral process, including through public education campaigns conducted in the media, as well as in town halls, and through technical assistance to women's groups in drafting an advocacy document, which was submitted to presidential candidates.

24. The Government stepped up the security for the electoral process by deploying some 25,000 Malian defence and security forces. Following extensive negotiations, signatory armed groups and splinter groups also deployed their combatants around polling stations in the main centres of the five northern regions. MINUSMA assisted Malian defence and security forces in providing technical advice and security, including increased patrols in the cities of Aguelhok, Kidal, Ménaka and Tessalit, and positioned 820 peacekeepers on reserve at strategic locations for a period of five weeks. Sixteen training sessions on electoral security were conducted by MINUSMA for 465 Malian defence and security elements, including 44 women, in Bamako and in central and northern Mali.

25. President Keita was sworn into office on 4 September. He reappointed Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga as Prime Minister. On 9 September, a new Cabinet was formed, comprising 32 ministers, including 11 women, respecting the 30 per cent quota for women in appointed positions.

C. Extension of State authority and support for Malian defence and security institutions

26. In line with its mandate to support the restoration and extension of State authority to the northern and central regions of the country, MINUSMA, with funding from the trust fund for peace and security in Mali, completed the construction of a base for Malian defence and security forces in the Mopti region on 23 August. The next day, the Mission's camp in Gossi, Timbuktu region, was handed over to the Malian armed forces to support their efforts in the region. The Mission also conducted an assessment mission to Boni, Mopti region, and Tessit, Gao region, to evaluate the work required to reinforce the protection of the Malian armed forces' camps in those localities. Within the framework of the memorandum of understanding between MINUSMA and the Government related to the mutual support between MINUSMA and the Malian armed forces, the Mission also provided four casualty and medical evacuations, shared information and conducted patrols with Malian defence forces.

27. The European Union Training Mission in Mali and Operation Barkhane continued to support and train Malian armed forces. Operation Barkhane launched a new partnership programme, which would allow selected platoon commanders of the Malian armed forces to be embedded in an Operation Barkhane unit.

28. MINUSMA, jointly with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other international partners, continued to provide technical assistance to the Malian

specialized judicial unit tasked with anti-terrorism and transnational organized crime. Specifically, in addition to mentoring and the building capacity of the unit's specialized investigations brigade, the Mission, at the request of national authorities, provided technical assistance at 22 crime scenes in the collection and examination of evidence at the Mission's level 2 anti-terrorism forensic laboratory and in mobile data analysis. During the reporting period, six terrorism-related cases were brought to trial by the specialized judicial unit, all of which resulted in convictions with lengthy sentences.

29. The Mission supported the Government in the development of interministerial security plans for the main prison in Bamako and a prison emergency simulation exercise aimed at improving coordination among security and defence services in response to internal disturbances and external attacks. From 31 May to 18 August, the Mission, in collaboration with international partners, trained 497 members of the Malian security forces, including 40 women, from Bamako, Gao and Timbuktu on various policing modules and on human rights.

30. On 10 July, the national policy on preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism in Mali and its action plan for 2018–2020 were launched, with the support of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. The national policy encompasses five pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution, response and social cohesion. During nine training sessions held between 31 May and 17 September, a total of 179 Malian security forces, including 23 women, were trained in various areas to build and develop their capacity in preventing violent extremism.

D. Regional developments

31. On 29 June, a complex attack using a suicide vehicle carrying improvised explosive devices targeted the headquarters of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel in Sévaré, Mopti region. It killed 2 Malian soldiers and injured 11 elements of the Joint Force, including 5 from Chad, 4 from the Niger and 2 from Mali. This was the first complex attack in the Mopti region. At the time of reporting, all seven battalions of the Joint Force were deployed. In total, the Joint Force had conducted six inter-army operations since its establishment. On 12 July, General Hanena Ould Sidi, Deputy Army Chief of Mauritania, was appointed force commander of the Joint Force, replacing General Didier Dacko; and on 7 August the police adviser to the Joint Force, Abdellahi Sidi Aly, was appointed.

32. MINUSMA continued to support the Joint Force in line with Security Council resolution 2391 (2017). On 6 July, MINUSMA reviewed its support plan with respect to the Joint Force, focusing on the engineering component. Following the attack of 29 June, the Mission expressed its readiness to provide assistance in the construction of a new Headquarters; that offer is being considered by the Joint Force. The tripartite mechanism, comprising the Joint Force, the United Nations and the European Union, identified the effective operationalization of the police component as a priority to contribute to greater accountability, the rule of law and the prevention of and response to human rights violations. During his visit to Mali, the Under-Secretary-General, together with my Special Representative, the Permanent Secretary of the Group of Five for the Sahel and the incoming and outgoing Joint Force commanders, assessed the challenges and the urgent needs faced by the Joint Force. They identified a series of initiatives aimed at ensuring effective, sustainable and predictable financing of the Joint Force.

III. Major security developments

33. During the reporting period, the security situation remained of serious concern. The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims attacked MINUSMA, Malian defence and security forces and international forces across central and northern Mali, particularly in the Gao and Mopti regions. There were also increases in intimidation, kidnappings and targeted assassinations of both civilians and signatory armed group members, and in alleged cases of sexual and gender-based violence, especially in the centre of the country.

A. Asymmetrical and other attacks

34. The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara enhanced their coordination in the tri-border area between Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, resulting in attacks against Malian defence and security forces and international forces. Also targeted were civilians accused of collaborating with the Malian State and groups such as the Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés and the Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad.

35. On the eve of the presidential elections, elements of the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims threatened the holding of the elections and burned and looted polling stations. On 23 July, the airport facilities of Sévaré came under indirect fire attack by two rockets, followed by small arms fire; there were no casualties. On 29 July, terrorist groups destroyed or ransacked at least 50 polling stations in the Mopti, Ségou and Timbuktu regions. Also during the first round, a rocket landed near a polling station in Aguelhok, Kidal region, resulting in the temporary suspension of voting.

36. On the day of the run-off election, in the Timbuktu region, unidentified armed assailants shot dead the head of the polling station in Arkodia and robbed electoral officers. In the Mopti and Ségou regions, three polling stations were attacked by unidentified armed elements. A total of three civilians and six members of the Malian armed forces were killed in attacks during the electoral process in Mopti, Ségou and Timbuktu.

37. On 4 September, the MINUSMA camp in Ménaka came under indirect attack from unidentified assailants, resulting in the injury of one international civilian staff member. This was the first attack that had been carried out against that camp.

38. During the reporting period, 42 incidents involving the use of an improvised explosive device were recorded, with 38 per cent occurring in the central regions. Since January 2018, the number of improvised explosive device incidents has significantly increased, with 133 incidents occurring, compared with 78 during the same period in 2017. However, there has been a 5 per cent decrease in the number of casualties compared with the same period in 2017.

39. During the reporting period, armed groups conducted 58 attacks, comprising: 21 against Malian defence and security forces; 16 against MINUSMA and 1 against a United Nations agency; 17 against signatory armed groups; 1 against Operation Barkhane; 1 against the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel; and 1 against a joint convoy of the Joint Force, Malian defence and security forces, the Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et Alliés and the Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad. The highest number of attacks were carried out in Mopti (16) and Gao (15), followed by Kidal (10), Timbuktu (10), Ménaka (5) and Ségou (2).

40. Malian defence and security forces were heavily targeted, and the number of victims increased: 19 soldiers were killed and 24 injured, compared with 6 killed and

21 injured during the previous reporting period. Attacks against the Malian defence and security forces (21) were concentrated mostly in Mopti (13), followed by Gao (4), Ségou (2) and Timbuktu (2). Moreover, a series of clashes between signatory armed groups and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara in the Ménaka region left 40 members of the signatory armed groups killed and 4 injured, compared with 26 members killed and 17 injured in attacks during the previous period.

B. Protection of civilians

41. In the centre of Mali, the security environment continued to deteriorate significantly, mainly as a result of targeted attacks and intercommunity clashes between armed self-defence or violent extremist groups. The reporting period recorded the highest number of civilian casualties since the deployment of MINUSMA, with 287 civilians killed, including 14 women and 10 children, and with 38 injured and 67 abducted. Several communes in Djenné and Koro districts, Mopti region, have been caught in a spiral of violence and retaliation, leading to killings and the displacement of more than 5,000 civilians.

42. The main perpetrators of recent violence are self-proclaimed self-defence groups, namely, Dan Nan Ambassagou and Dogon Ambassagou. Both are affiliated with *dozos* (traditional hunters) claiming to protect the Dogon community, and the Alliance pour le salut du Sahel, which claims to protect the Fulani community. Some of the deadliest incidents occurred on 23 June, when self-defence groups clashed in the Djenné district, killing 24 civilians, including 5 children, and on 1 July in the village of Bombou, Koro district, when 16 individuals were killed, including 5 women and a young boy, and resulted in large-scale population displacement. On 8 July, 14 corpses reportedly belonging to members of the Fulani community were found in a well in Tagari village, Koro district. On the same day, members of the Alliance pour le salut du Sahel reportedly attacked members of the Dogon community in Dioungani, Koro district, killing four civilians. On 25 July, up to 17 civilians of the Fulani community were killed in the village of Somena, Djenné district.

43. During the reporting period, 10 recorded incidents, including 3 in the Kidal region, 5 in the Mopti region, 1 in the Timbuktu region and 1 in the Ségou region, involving improvised explosive devices killed a total of 21 civilians and injured 21 others. All of the incidents involved improvised explosive devices that detonated when hit by a privately owned vehicle.

44. In an effort to stabilize the Mopti region, Malian defence and security forces were deployed in Kouakourou and Koro towns, which resulted in a decrease in the number of violent incidents in those localities. The Mission continued to use its good offices and advocate with the Government to find durable solutions to the deterioration of the situation. Meanwhile, the limited presence of State authority and public administrators in rural areas of central Mali has created a security vacuum in which violent extremist groups have increased their influence.

45. On 6 and 7 June, MINUSMA provided logistical support for a government initiative aimed at addressing local conflicts through the operationalization of a regional reconciliation support team in Mopti. From 11 and 24 June, MINUSMA conducted Operation Furaji II on the Douentza-Hombori axis, Mopti region, which led to a reduction in the number of attacks against civilians. On 9 July, MINUSMA launched an integrated justice and reconciliation project in three villages in Koro district, Mopti region. The project was aimed at preventing further conflicts between the Dogon and Fulani communities.

46. On 28 August, following a three-month mediation process led by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 34 Dogon and Fulani village chiefs signed an intercommunal

peace agreement to end violence in the Koro district in the Mopti region. The agreement includes commitments to ensuring peaceful access to natural resources and prioritizing the use of traditional mediation mechanisms to prevent and manage disputes. The agreement was rejected by the Dan Nan Ambassagou group, which claimed that it had not been involved in the process.

C. Mine action, weapons and small arms

47. On 7 September, for the first time a group of Malian instructors trained by MINUSMA delivered an explosive ordnance disposal training course to 30 members of the Malian armed forces. Malian defence forces, with the technical assistance of MINUSMA and the European Union Training Mission in Mali, adopted their first standard operating procedures on improvised explosive device disposal.

48. The Mission trained 65 Malian defence and security forces in explosive threat mitigation, including members of one Malian armed forces unit and two gendarmerie mobile teams specializing in improvised explosive device disposal.

49. Efforts to enhance the weapons and ammunition management capacity of the Malian defence and security forces continued with the training of 14 personnel in safe and secure storage practices in Timbuktu. Since 2014, MINUSMA has trained more than 300 personnel, ranging from depot managers and storekeepers to weapons and ammunition management national trainers, to tackle the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons.

IV. Human rights situation

50. The human rights situation remained of serious concern. During the reporting period, MINUSMA documented 129 cases of human rights violations and abuses, involving at least 518 victims, including 68 women and 32 children, compared with 344 cases and 475 victims during the previous reporting period. There were 54 cases of extrajudicial execution or other arbitrary killings, 15 cases of abduction or enforced disappearance, 18 cases of torture or ill-treatment and 8 cases of unlawful detention. Of the total number of documented cases, members of the Malian defence and security forces were involved in 18 human rights violations, including 4 cases of extrajudicial execution. The Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims and other similar groups were responsible for 47 cases of human rights abuses, while community self-defence groups were responsible for 49 cases, and signatory groups and other non-signatory or splinter groups for 15 cases. A total of 64 per cent of human rights violations and abuses occurred in the Mopti and Ségou regions, 13 per cent in the Timbuktu region, 7 per cent in Bamako, 6 per cent in the Gao region, 5 per cent in the Kidal region and 4 per cent in the Ménaka region.

51. MINUSMA investigated serious allegations of violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law by elements of the Malian armed forces, in the context of counter-terrorism operations in central Mali, including the alleged summary execution of 25 civilians from Nantaka village, Mopti region, on 13 June. On 19 June, the Ministry of Defence issued a press release confirming the existence of a mass grave near Nantaka and the involvement of members of the Malian armed forces in the killing. On 7 July, the Ministry announced the opening of a criminal investigation into the killing of 12 civilians by members of the Malian armed forces operating under the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel on 19 May in Boulikessi village, Mopti region. On 5 September, the Mopti prosecutor requested the Mission's assistance in the Boulikessi investigation, as no progress had been made to date.

52. During the reporting period, violent extremist groups were responsible for the arbitrary killing of at least 32 civilians in the Gao, Ménaka and Timbuktu regions. Islamic State in the Greater Sahara continued to target civilians in the Niger border area of the Gao and Ménaka regions and allegedly killed at least 22 civilians in that area. The Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés and the Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad were involved in the arbitrary killing of at least five civilians, in the Gao, Ménaka and Timbuktu regions.

53. MINUSMA monitored the human rights situation in the context of the presidential elections and activated its human rights call centre to facilitate the reporting of violations. Violent extremist groups accounted for all the election-related human rights abuses documented by MINUSMA, including intimidation and direct attacks against polling stations and against individuals perceived to be supportive of the elections. Of the 55 security incidents documented, at least 8 may constitute serious human rights abuses, including the killing of at least three electoral agents and the abduction of a polling station president in the Mopti region, and four physical attacks against electoral workers in the Mopti and Timbuktu regions. MINUSMA conducted 33 sensitization and training sessions on human rights and elections, benefiting 914 participants, including 220 women.

54. The Mission delivered training courses on human rights for 250 members of the Malian defence and security forces, 526 members of the civil society and 61 elements of the Operational Coordination Mechanism. From 21 to 24 June, the Mission and local partners carried out a sensitization campaign on the prevention of HIV and on conflict-related sexual violence for 404 women and girls, including internally displaced persons in Gao, 263 of whom were tested for HIV and referred to health facilities.

55. The country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict verified 58 grave violations against children. A total of 17 children were killed and 14 were maimed in the Kidal, Mopti, Timbuktu regions; 12 children were separated from armed groups in the Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions and are following a reintegration programme in Bamako and Gao; seven cases of attacks and threats against schools and hospitals; and nine cases of denial of humanitarian access. MINUSMA provided technical and financial support to the United Youth Network for Children's Rights, composed of more than 60 youth and child associations, to implement an online social media platform to discuss and disseminate Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) on children in armed conflict.

56. During the reporting period, MINUSMA documented nine cases of conflict-related sexual violence involving at least nine victims, including three minors. These cases included four rapes and five gang rapes perpetrated by at least 14 unidentified armed elements in the Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions. From January to June 2018, 1,115 cases of gender-based violence were recorded, including 758 cases of sexual violence. Sixty-eight per cent of the victims were under 18 years of age. The survivors received 150 reproductive health kits, including post-rape kits.

57. During the reporting period, more than 1,087 individuals appeared before the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission. The Commission reported that as at 31 August, it had received a total of 9,360 depositions since 3 January 2017. UN-Women continued to provide technical support to the Commission in integrating gender into its work.

V. Humanitarian situation

58. The humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate, mainly as a result of insecurity in the northern and central regions and the impacts of a poor rainy season in 2017. Severe floods hit several regions, affecting some 25,000 people. In addition, intercommunal clashes led to a surge in internal displacement, nearly doubling the number of internally displaced persons between January and July. Overall, 5.2 million people now require lifesaving and protection assistance, up from 3.8 million people in 2017. Consequently, the 2018 humanitarian response plan was revised in July to reflect the increase in needs, with the number of people targeted by the response plan increasing from 1.56 million to 2.9 million. The funding requirements increased from $263 million to $330 million, of which only 32 per cent ($106 million) had been received as at 6 September.

59. On 12 June, the World Food Programme activated an internal level 3 emergency for the lean season in the Sahel that would be in place until 29 November. As a result, from July to September the World Food Programme and its partners scaled up distributions by 100,000 beneficiaries to provide emergency food assistance to 604,000 persons, including 308,000 women, reaching 65 per cent of those in critical need. The World Food Programme also provided emergency nutritional assistance to 228,000 persons through blanket supplementary feeding.

60. In early August, the humanitarian country team and the Government, with logistical support from MINUSMA, provided medical, nutritional and food assistance to several villages in the Mondoro commune, Mopti region, following reports of 224 cases of malnutrition, including 29 deaths owing to a lack of medical care. On 11 August, Malian authorities, humanitarian actors and MINUSMA provided emergency assistance, including water, food and non-food items, to more than 360 vulnerable households in Aguelhok, Kidal region, after damage resulting from severe flooding.

61. From 31 May to 6 September, 55 security incidents, involving mostly compound break-ins and vehicle thefts, affected humanitarian actors, compared with 50 cases during the previous reporting period. On 18 June, six international non-governmental organizations suspended their activities in the Ménaka region owing to insecurity; five of them resumed their activities on 30 June. On 11 and 26 July, United Nations armoured vehicles were fired upon by small arms fire in Timbuktu; there were no injuries as a result.

62. As at 31 July, the Government, with the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, had registered 75,351 internally displaced persons, 526,505 returning internally displaced persons, 67,420 Malian returnees from asylum countries and 601 asylum seekers. Mali hosts 24,368 refugees from various countries and more than 139,573 Malian refugees remain in neighbouring countries.

63. At the end of the school year, 735 schools remained closed in the Mopti (464), Timbuktu (88), Gao (67), Ménaka (60), Kidal (42) and Ségou (14) regions, owing to insecurity, including threats and attacks from violent extremist groups. In June, the national humanitarian education cluster, in collaboration with regional education authorities, indicated that 1,108 schools had been closed at least once (over a period of 20 school days) during the 2017/18 school year, affecting 332,400 children. To mitigate the impact of the forced closure of these schools and ensure access to inclusive and quality education in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 4 and its targets, humanitarian actors provided support to the Government and communities through alternative forms of education in affected regions.

VI. Economic development

64. Real gross domestic product growth is expected to remain robust at approximately 5 per cent in 2018, according to the International Monetary Fund. On 6 and 7 June, a joint national budget review conducted by the Government and technical and financial partners resulted in the recommendations that the tax base be broadened and that the transfer of budgetary resources to local authorities be accelerated.

65. On 16 July, the Malian Government presented its voluntary national report on the Sustainable Development Goals at the high-level political forum on sustainable development in New York. It highlighted the progress made in societal transformation and resilience and concerns over increased dependency on international development assistance. The same day, the Government launched the formulation of a new strategic framework for economic recovery and sustainable development, based on the Sustainable Development Goals and the prospective vision for Mali 2040.

66. MINUSMA and UNDP supported the implementation of various aspects of the national policy on preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism in Mali and its action plan, including through the establishment of the offices of the national directorate and a national observatory on preventing and countering violent extremism in Bamako, as well as a pilot project on preventing violent extremism in Mopti, targeting 200 young and teachers.

67. In July, UNDP launched preparatory activities for the organization of a subregional conference on the economic impact of violent extremism in the countries of the Sahel region. The Peacebuilding Fund supported workshops for youth organizations in Bamako, Timbuktu, Mopti and Ségou on radicalism, violent extremism and the prevention role played by communities. Jointly organized by a non-governmental organization, the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes and the National Youth Council, these discussions were focused on the national policy on preventing violent extremism and the causes of and strategies for eliminating violent extremism in Mali, and were broadcast on local radio stations.

VII. United Nations strategic frameworks and integration plans

68. Pursuant to resolution 2423 (2018), MINUSMA is reprioritizing its efforts and resources to focus on political tasks and has initiated an internal examination of its key strategic documentation and plans, including the Mission concept. It has developed criteria to inform the revision of its footprint in northern and central Mali, with a view to optimizing and rebalancing its presence, while strengthening its coordination and planning mechanisms both within the Mission and with the United Nations country team.

69. On 3 September, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and my Special Representative led a retreat with the United Nations country team and MINUSMA in Bamako. At the retreat concrete measures were identified to strengthen integration, including through the presence of the country team in the central and northern regions of the country, and to help to restore stability in the centre, by adopting a more multifaceted approach. Participants agreed on the importance of increasing Malian ownership of the peace process and inclusiveness in its implementation, notably through the proposed pact for peace. They also defined the strategic directions of the future integrated strategic framework, which is being drafted.

VIII. Capacities of the Mission

A. Military

70. As at 15 September, 12,231 military personnel had been deployed, out of the authorized strength of 13,289 personnel, including 39 military observers, 437 staff officers and 11,755 contingent personnel. Women accounted for 2.64 per cent of military personnel.

71. The implementation of the recommendations resulting from the technical review conducted in July 2017 continued, including the deployment of staff officers to the forward command post in Mopti and the establishment of an information operations cell and the deployment of officers specialized in force protection in Bamako. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations approved an increase in the statement of unit requirements of infantry battalions from two to three mechanized companies, including one that must include mine-protected armoured vehicles. Discussions with relevant troop-contributing countries to adjust the existing memorandums of understanding and deployments are ongoing.

72. The lack of medium utility helicopters in the Mopti and the Timbuktu regions, and the lack of contingent-owned armoured personnel carriers, including mine-protected vehicles, remained the most critical equipment shortfalls. This gap has limited the operational reach of MINUSMA in certain tasks such as patrolling and providing escorts, particularly in rural areas, thereby hindering mandate implementation.

73. The deployment of motorized elements of the quick-reaction force in Mopti was completed in July. A medium utility helicopter unit provided by Canada was deployed to Gao in July, while airfield support units provided by El Salvador and Jordan were deployed to Timbuktu and Gao in June and July, respectively.

B. Police

74. On 6 September, 1,728 police personnel, or 90 per cent of the authorized strength, were deployed, with 311 individual police officers, of whom 18.65 per cent were women, and 1,417 formed police unit personnel, of whom 4.73 per cent were women.

75. MINUSMA police continued to require the deployment of an additional formed police unit, five armoured personnel carriers for deployed formed police units, and six armoured vehicles for individual police officers. The Mission also requires the support of Member States to generate 25 individual police officers with specialized expertise, including in the fields of forensics, investigations, community-oriented policing, security sector reform, counter-terrorism, serious organized crime and drug trafficking.

C. Civilian personnel

76. As at 19 September, MINUSMA had deployed 1,584 civilian personnel, representing 83 per cent of the total of 1,901 authorized positions (814 international, 898 national and 189 United Nations Volunteer). Women constituted 23 per cent of civilian personnel overall, including 26 per cent of international positions, 19 per cent of national positions and 31 per cent of United Nations Volunteer positions.

D. Camp construction and securing supply routes

77. In line with the Mission's plan to optimize its supply chain routes, the transfer of 14 international civilian staff posts from Bamako to Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu, and the subsequent reassignment of incumbents were completed during the reporting period. Since the Cotonou-Niamey-Gao supply route opened, in April 2017, more than 1,400 containers have been moved to Gao along this route without military escort.

78. The rehabilitation of the Gao airstrip was completed on 31 August, which allowed night operations to resume in mid-September.

E. Environment

79. As part of the implementation of its interim risk mitigation plan, and in order to minimize pollution risks, the Mission established a testing protocol and conducted training sessions on 30 June at all 14 MINUSMA sites, mainly where wastewater treatment plants were not yet operational. In June, the Mission completed a smart-metering pilot project in Bamako and an energy management assessment in Gao to prepare the Mission's energy management plan.

IX. Safety and security of United Nations personnel

80. MINUSMA continued to implement its action plan to reduce peacekeeper fatalities and injuries. It reinforced the surveillance and protection systems of the camp in Gao through the establishment of a long-range electro-optical system to detect movements in the periphery of the camp, in June. Public announcement systems were installed at the Mission's regional headquarters and the super-camps in Gao and Timbuktu to improve the communication of alerts in the event of an attack. The Mission also strengthened the camp's perimeter force protection and defensive features, as well as operation coordination centres, and improved air support coordination in Timbuktu. MINUSMA established dedicated Mission intelligence structures and developed training modules on intelligence reporting processes.

81. Although eight peacekeepers and one civilian staff member sustained injuries as a result of the security incidents referred to in paragraph 39 above, no MINUSMA personnel, including its contractors, suffered fatalities during hostile acts that occurred during the reporting period. The Operation Barkhane forces sustained no fatalities or injuries. While the number of hostile acts against MINUSMA has remained generally consistent, the past six months have shown a positive trend, with a 30 per cent drop in fatalities and 40 per cent drop in injuries compared with the second half of 2017.

82. Training on the search for and detection of improvised explosive devices provided to MINUSMA troops since 2015 has had positive results, as the rate at which MINUSMA troops providing escorts for United Nations logistics convoys detect and neutralize improvised explosive devices has increased to 46 per cent in 2018, compared with 31 per cent in 2017 and 27 per cent in 2016.

83. The Mission's support for the operationalization of the specialized judicial unit on terrorism and transnational organized crime facilitated the monitoring of cases related to attacks against peacekeepers and improved the cooperation of the Mission with the unit regarding such investigations. As a result, in June, the special prosecutor of the unit submitted two requests for assistance in relation to the deaths of peacekeepers.

X. Conduct and discipline

84. No allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were recorded during the reporting period. The Mission continued to implement the three-pronged strategy for combating sexual exploitation and abuse and provided training to a total of 1,727 personnel, comprising 1,452 uniformed personnel and 275 civilians, under the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual exploitation and abuse.

XI. Observations

85. I wish to commend the Malian people for the peaceful and successful holding of the presidential elections. Presidential candidates and their political affiliations demonstrated considerable political maturity throughout the electoral process. The Government made commendable efforts to organize the elections within the constitutional deadlines, despite several anomalies and some security incidents in northern and central Mali. I wish to recognize, in particular, important measures taken by the Prime Minister, Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga, to promote a constructive dialogue and address mistrust in the electoral process, as well as the efforts of Malian defence and security forces, with the contribution of signatory and other armed groups, to secure the electoral process.

86. I am gratified by the efforts made by the United Nations throughout the electoral process. I commend the proactive good offices and political support provided by my Special Representative, including coordinating the actions of the international community and observation missions of the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union and the International Organization of la Francophonie.

87. I wish to congratulate President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita on re-election. The onus is now on him and his Government to redouble the efforts to implement the remaining key provisions of the Agreement and move forward on institutional reforms. In this regard, I appreciate the fact that he made the implementation of the Agreement one of his priorities during the inauguration ceremony held on 4 September. The people and the Government of Mali together must seize the opportunity to shape the foundations for lasting peace and stability, building on the Agreement. In that context, the pact for peace, as requested in resolution 2423 (2018), offers an opportunity to reinvigorate the peace process. While it is clear that the pact should not duplicate structures or replace the Agreement, I sincerely believe that it represents a chance to reinvigorate the implementation of the Agreement. The pact should include political reforms such as decentralization, security sector reform and the rule of law, as well as socioeconomic development, based on greater inclusiveness and agreed benchmarks and with the coherent support of international and regional partners. I encourage Malian stakeholders and partners, under the leadership of the Government and with the support of my Special Representative, to take part in its materialization.

88. I welcome recent progress in the implementation of the Agreement, including the appointment of interim authorities in 21 districts of the five northern regions, the progressive operationalization of the mixed units of the Operational Coordination Mechanism in the regions of Kidal and Timbuktu, and the adoption of the national security sector reform strategy. While some women were appointed as members of interim authorities, I urge parties to consider a more meaningful participation of women in the peace process, which is essential for its success. The upcoming elections will offer an opportunity to realize the 30 per cent quota for women in elected positions, in accordance with Malian law.

89. In addition, I urge the parties to finalize a national vision for the reconstitution and redeployment of the Malian defence and security forces and of the territorial police, who are at the core of durable stability and the protection of populations. I encourage the parties to sustain the positive momentum and renewed trust in the peace process that I witnessed during my visit to Mali in May. Malian parties must live up to their obligations and commitments, including by respecting the timelines provided in the road map of 22 March, with respect to which I will report on progress in its implementation as requested in resolution 2423 (2018).

90. Continuing security incidents that have occurred in central Mali, including during the presidential elections, underline the depth of the crisis in the region. Intercommunal conflict, exacerbated by violent extremist groups, is fraying an already fragile social fabric and is deeply concerning. Too high a human toll has accrued as a result of the ongoing spiral of violence. I wish to express my heartfelt condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives as a result of the deepening insecurity. The Government's efforts on the integrated security plan for the central regions is important and must be intensified and ensure simultaneous progress, not only on security, but also on governance, development and reconciliation. I call upon the Government to undertake the disarmament of armed groups, promote reconciliation and find durable solutions aimed at protecting civilians.

91. The human rights situation is alarming. It is absolutely imperative that the Government prevent human rights violations and abuses, including those committed by Malian armed forces when conducting counter-terrorism operations. Full and timely investigations into all allegations are essential, as are measures to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to account. The United Nations stands ready to assist the Government in this regard, as requested. I also wish to reiterate the responsibility of the Malian authorities to take all necessary actions to swiftly investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of crimes and grave human rights abuses against civilians, as well as those responsible for attacks against humanitarian workers, MINUSMA and international forces and Malian defence and security forces.

92. I condemn once more the 29 June terrorist attack against the headquarters of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel in Sévaré. I have continuously supported the efforts of the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel in operationalizing the Joint Force, and this attack will not diminish my determination to curb the expansion of violent extremism. I welcome the efforts made towards the operationalization of the Joint Force, including of the police component, which will ensure continuity between the operations of the Joint Force and judicial systems in accordance with the rule of law and human rights. I note the appointment and assumption of duty of a new Force Commander of the Joint Force from Mauritania. Although the Joint Force is making progress, predictable and sustainable resources, including from Member States, will facilitate its full operationalization.

93. Investing in sustainable development and stability in Mali would yield tangible dividends with respect to building inclusive and peaceful societies and preventing the spread of conflict, extremism and threats to international peace and security to the Sahel and the broader West African region. Continued attacks have negative consequences for development opportunities, particularly in the border areas of Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. There is a need for countries in the Sahel region to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations to further advance the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel through the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel. It is critical to focus on the prevention of violent extremism and conflict, including through education and economic opportunities, especially for youth. I am concerned about the continued closure of schools in central regions of Mali, which will have a lasting impact on generations of youth.

94. The humanitarian situation in Mali has also significantly deteriorated over the past year as a result of increasing clashes and a poor rainy season in 2017. The level of needs is higher than at any point since the beginning of the crisis in 2012, with more than one out of four Malians requiring humanitarian assistance. While needs continue to increase, humanitarian funding has decreased, preventing a timely, at-scale and appropriate response. Our collective efforts, including through the urgent funding of the 2018 humanitarian response plan for Mali, are even more important today. I have also called for renewed commitment to reviving the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel to obtain a positive and durable impact across the Sahel.

95. While the number of attacks continues unabated, I am encouraged by the reduction in the number of fatalities and casualties among MINUSMA personnel. It demonstrates that our efforts, and in particular of the Mission, are bearing fruit. Meanwhile, the requirement for mobility and better-protected forces remains and affects negatively the implementation of the Mission's mandate. As requested by the Security Council in its resolution 2423 (2018), MINUSMA has taken a number of measures to reprioritize its efforts and resources to implement its core political and security tasks. Efforts are also being made to strengthen the presence and activities of the United Nations country team in the central and northern regions of Mali to tackle the multidimensionality of instability.

96. I wish to express my deep appreciation to my Special Representative for Mali, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his excellent leadership; to all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel for their continued hard work in a challenging environment and under stressful conditions; and to troop- and police-contributing countries, Algeria, as a lead mediator, the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union and other regional organizations, multilateral and bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their invaluable support for peace in Mali.

Annex I

Military and police strength of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali as at 14 September 2018

	Military			*Police*								
	Experts on mission, staff officers and in units			*Individual police officers*			*In formed police units*			*Total police*		
Country	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Armenia	1		1									
Austria	2	1	3									
Bangladesh	1 409	9	1 418				278		278	278		278
Belgium	121	12	133									
Benin	254	3	257	22	2	24	139	1	140	161	3	154
Bhutan	4		4									
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2		2									
Burkina Faso	1 636	68	1 704	22	5	27	133	5	138	155	10	165
Burundi	1	1	2									
Cambodia	278	25	303									
Cameroon	2		2	16	4	20				16	4	20
Canada	126	12	138									
Chad	1 413	37	1 450	17	4	21				17	4	21
China	387	16	403									
Côte d'Ivoire	159	4	163	19	5	24				19	5	24
Czechia	5		5									
Denmark	1		1									
Egypt	335		335	6		6	134		134	140		140
El Salvador	141	15	156									
Estonia	3		3									
Ethiopia	1		1									
Finland	3	1	4	5	1	6				5	1	6
France	22		22	11	2	13				11	2	13
Gambia	4		4									
Germany	411	9	420	7	1	8				7	1	8
Ghana	165		165									
Guatemala	2		2									
Guinea	858	10	868	11	10	21				11	10	21
Hungary				1		1				1		1
Indonesia	10		10									
Italy	1	1	2	4		4				4		4
Jordan	64		64	7		7				7		7
Kenya	10	1	11									
Latvia	8	1	9									
Liberia	80	6	86									

	Military			Police								
	Experts on mission, staff officers and in units			Individual police officers			In formed police units			Total police		
Country	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Lithuania	36	3	39									
Madagascar				1		1				1		1
Mauritania	8		8									
Mexico	2		2									
Nepal	151	3	154									
Netherlands	338	8	346	3	4	7				3	4	7
New Zealand		1	1									
Niger	854	9	863	16	01	17				16	01	17
Nigeria	72	15	87	2	5	7	125	14	139	127	19	146
Norway	13	2	15									
Pakistan	3		3									
Portugal	3		3	1		1				1		1
Romania	2	1	3	2		2				2		2
Senegal	1 078	14	1 092	28	1	29	282	28	310	310	29	339
Sierra Leone	11	2	13									
Spain	1		1	2		2				2		2
Sri Lanka	207		207									
Sweden	227	25	252	5	2	7				5	2	7
Switzerland	5	1	6	4		4				4		4
Togo	898	38	936	13		13	259	19	278	272	19	291
Tunisia	2	2	4	20	2	22				20	2	22
Turkey				2		2				2		2
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	2		2									
United States of America	18	7	25									
Total	**11 850**	**363**	**12 213**	**247**	**49**	**296**	**1 350**	**67**	**1 417**	**1 597**	**116**	**1 713**

Annex II

Map

MINUSMA
Deployment
September 2018
National capital
Regional capital
Town, village
Major airport
International boundary
Regional boundary
Sector line
Main road
Other road
Track
Railroad
0 100 200 300 km
0 100 200 mi
MAURITANIA
ALGERIA
MALI
NIGER
BURKINA FASO
GUINEA
SENEGAL
GUINEA BISSAU
GAMBIA
SIERRA LEONE
GHANA
TOGO
BENIN
NIGERIA
COTE D'IVOIRE
Sector WEST
Sector EAST
Sector NORTH
Sector SOUTH
TOMBOUCTOU
GAO
KIDAL
KAYES
KOULIKORO
SEGOU
MOPTI
SIKASSO
Nioro du Sahel
Aourou
Kayes
Diéma
Tambacounda
Bafoulabé
Kita
Kati
Koulikoro
Bamako
Ségou
San
Djenné
Mopti / Sevare
Douentza
Nampala
Dyabali
Niono
Koutiala
Bougouni
Sikasso
Yanfolila
Kolondiéba
Kankan
Goundam
Tombouctou
Léré
Ber
Gossi
Gao
Ménaka
Ansongo
Bourem
Anéfis
Aguelhok
Tessalit
Bordj Mokhtar
Kidal
Ouagadougou
Ayoûnel Atroûs
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United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an account of the activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for the period from 24 May to 14 September 2018, pursuant to the mandate set out in Security Council resolution 350 (1974) and extended in subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2426 (2018).

II. Situation in the area of operations and activities of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

2. During the reporting period, the ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic was maintained, albeit in a volatile environment owing to the ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, and notwithstanding a number of violations of the Agreement on Disengagement between Israeli and Syrian Forces (Disengagement of Forces Agreement) of 1974, which are described below. Following an offensive launched in late June and early July 2018 by the Syrian armed forces in south-western Syrian Arab Republic, the security situation in the UNDOF area of operations evolved rapidly, with a spike in fighting between the Syrian armed forces against non-State armed opposition groups and other armed groups, including the listed terrorist groups Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (formerly Jabhat Fath al-Sham and the Nusrah Front) and the Khalid ibn al-Walid Army, which have pledged allegiance to Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. After heavy artillery and aerial bombardments on the Bravo side, the situation in the UNDOF area of operations changed considerably, with the Syrian Government regaining control of parts of the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side that had previously been under the control of various armed groups. As underscored again by the Security Council in its resolution 2426 (2018), there should be no military activity of any kind in the area of operations.

3. In employing its best efforts to maintain the ceasefire and see that it is scrupulously observed, as prescribed in the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, UNDOF reports all breaches of the ceasefire line that it observes. All incidents of firing into the area of separation and across the ceasefire line, as well as the crossing of the ceasefire line by individuals, are violations of the Agreement. In its regular interaction with both sides, the leadership of UNDOF continued to call upon both

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parties to exercise restraint and prevent any miscalculation that might lead to an escalation of the situation. That was particularly the case when the Mission responded to incidents of spillover and retaliatory fire.

4. During the reporting period, UNDOF observed an escalation of tension between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic in the area of operations. On 27 and 28 May, United Nations personnel at observation post 53 saw Israel Defense Forces soldiers fire single shots from small arms into the area of separation.

5. On 11 July, United Nations personnel at observation post 73 observed the Israel Defense Forces fire three rockets into the area of separation in the vicinity of vacated United Nations observation post 71. On the same day, the Permanent Representative of Israel submitted a letter to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council reporting that the Israel Defense Forces had intercepted an "unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) that had been launched from Syria into Israel". Unidentified individuals continued to be present at observation post 71 until 2 August, after which they were no longer seen at the post.

6. According to open sources, on 13 July the Israel Defense Forces launched a missile towards a Syrian unmanned aerial vehicle over the area of separation. On 24 July, the Israel Defense Forces reported to UNDOF that earlier that day, they had used a missile to intercept a Syrian fighter jet that had entered 2 km into Israeli airspace. That same day, the Syrian authorities informed UNDOF that a Syrian aircraft had been shot down by Israel and that the aircraft had been flying in Syrian airspace. Around the time of the reported incident, UNDOF observed burning debris falling from an aircraft, approximately 10 km south-east of observation post 54, in the area of limitation on the Bravo side. UNDOF liaised with both parties to de-escalate the situation.

7. During a Syrian armed forces offensive on 30 July in south-western Syrian Arab Republic, United Nations personnel at observation post 55 observed artillery fire impact inside the area of separation close to vacated United Nations position 80A. UNDOF was not in a position to determine the point of origin of the artillery fire.

8. Transborder movements through Mount Hermon by unidentified individuals crossing between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic continued during the reporting period. On 16, 24 and 28 May, 6 and 26 June and 6 July, UNDOF observed unidentified individuals, some of them armed, with mules moving between the Bravo side and Lebanon. On 31 May, four unidentified individuals with mules approached the Hermon South position of the United Nations and requested food and water, which the UNDOF personnel were not in a position to provide. The group of individuals left the location and was later observed by UNDOF personnel firing nine single shots from small arms and 16 bursts of small arms fire at the perimeter of the Hermon South position.

9. Throughout June and July, UNDOF observed the daily crossing of the ceasefire line by unidentified individuals from the Bravo to the Alpha side. In the vicinity of observation post 54, in the southern part of the area of separation, groups of individuals from the Bravo side, ranging from 10 to 40 per day, were observed crossing the ceasefire line on foot and entering a building on the Alpha side. The Israel Defense Forces had previously informed UNDOF that a hospital located adjacent to their position in the area was providing humanitarian assistance to civilians from the Bravo side. Those groups of individuals were observed leaving the building, crossing the ceasefire line and moving back towards Mu'allaqah on the Bravo side. On 3 August, the Israel Defense Forces stated that they had begun closing and dismantling the hospital.

10. In the context of the Syrian conflict, the northern parts of the areas of separation and limitation were subjected to low levels of fighting. Sporadic exchanges of fire, which UNDOF deemed to be of low intensity, occurred between the Syrian armed forces, supported by pro-Government armed elements, against non-State armed groups. During the first two weeks of July, there was an increase in fighting in the vicinity of Jubbata al-Khashab, Turunjah and Ufaniyah, in particular between 13 and 15 July, after which the fighting subsided. On 31 July, open sources reported that the Syrian armed forces had entered the area of Jubbata al-Khashab and that arrangements had been made with local armed groups to surrender.

11. The fighting between the Syrian armed forces along with pro-Government armed elements against non-State armed groups in the central parts of the areas of separation and limitation increased to high levels of intensity during the month of July. A short period of high intensity bombardment was followed by the advance of the Syrian armed forces towards and their taking control of Tall Masharah on 17 July, Qunaytirah on 20 July and Hamadiyah al-Jadidah on 26 July. By the end of July, no kinetic activity was observed in those areas. Open sources reported that arrangements had been made with members of armed groups in Qunaytirah and Hamadiyah al-Jadidah, who chose to reconcile with the Syrian Government, and those who opted instead to relocate from the area with their families. UNDOF observed some non-State armed opposition groups decommissioning and destroying military equipment and ammunition in Qunaytirah and Hamadiyah al-Jadidah.

12. In the southern parts of the areas of separation and limitation on the Bravo side, heavy fighting was reported in July, with high-explosive rounds and bursts of heavy machine gun fire routinely heard at United Nations observation post 54 and position 80. The Syrian armed forces concentrated their initial offensive on Tall al-Harrah, Jasim, Nawa, Tasil and Tafas in the southern part of the area of limitation on the Bravo side, and, by 21 July, had gained control of those areas. By 31 July, the Syrian armed forces also had gained control of the area that had been held by the Khalid ibn al-Walid Army in the south-western part of the areas of separation and limitation.

13. UNDOF determined that, as of the beginning of August, the area of separation was under the control of the Syrian Government.

14. Throughout the reporting period, the Syrian armed forces, supported by pro-Government armed elements, maintained positions in the area of separation, in particular in the vicinity of Ba'th and Khan Arnabah, as well as along the main road connecting Qunaytirah to Damascus. On 12 occasions, UNDOF personnel observed 155-mm artillery pieces on the Bravo side within 10 km of the ceasefire line. Between 14 and 17 August, one armoured personnel carrier belonging to the Syrian armed forces was observed in the vicinity of United Nations position 85 in the southern part of the area of separation and was removed on 17 August after UNDOF protested to the Syrian authorities. During the reporting period, UNDOF also noted the occasional temporary presence of Russian military police in the area of separation.

15. The military violations on the Alpha side included the presence of 155-mm artillery pieces within 10 km of the ceasefire line. In addition, missile carriers, which are considered unauthorized military equipment in the area of limitation pursuant to the terms of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, were observed within the 25 km zone of the area of limitation.

16. UNDOF protested to both parties all violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement that it had observed, including the crossing of the ceasefire line by civilians from the Bravo side, the presence of unauthorized equipment and armed individuals in the area of separation, as well as the firing into the area of separation and across the ceasefire line.

17. The offensive by the Syrian armed forces in the area of limitation on the Bravo side in June and July resulted in a significant displacement of the civilian population towards the area of separation. From 26 June to 25 July, United Nations personnel observed internally displaced persons moving to locations inside the area of separation, specifically in the areas of Rafid and Burayqah, and establishing a number of camps, some of which were located close to United Nations position 80 and observation post 54. At the peak of the inflow of internally displaced persons, UNDOF observed 2,552 tents, which were housing approximately 17,055 persons. On 4, 8 and 9 July, groups of 50 to 400 internally displaced persons in the area of separation staged three protests near position 80, demanding an end to the conflict and the provision of food and water. In late July, there was a significant reduction in the number of internally displaced persons living in the area of separation. As at 17 August, UNDOF observed that there were approximately 120 internally displaced persons still living in tents located in the area of separation. Owing to the closure of the established crossing point at Qunaytirah between the Alpha and Bravo sides since late August 2014, UNDOF remained unable to facilitate humanitarian crossings between the two sides, including for students, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

18. Since its temporary relocation from a number of positions in September 2014, and pending its full return to the area of separation, UNDOF continued to maintain visibility, albeit limited, of the area of separation and the ceasefire line from its positions on Mount Hermon, Camp Faouar, position 80, in the southern part of the area of separation, and position 22, on the Alpha side. UNDOF operations continued to be supported by the military observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in Observer Group Golan, who have been under the operational control of UNDOF and have maintained five fixed and three temporary observation posts along the ceasefire line, as well as four temporary observation posts on Mount Hermon. The focus of Observer Group Golan has been on continuous static observation and situational awareness.

19. Through Observer Group Golan, UNDOF continued to carry out fortnightly inspections of equipment and force levels in the area of limitation on the Alpha side. Liaison officers from the Alpha side accompanied the inspection teams. Inspections in the area of limitation on the Bravo side were suspended because of the security situation and did not resume.

20. Engagement between UNDOF and the Israel Defense Forces continued, with a view to addressing restrictions on movement and access to United Nations positions in the area of separation and to reduce the delays and challenges experienced by United Nations personnel in crossing the technical fence to observation posts and positions. The Head of Mission and Force Commander of UNDOF continued to remind the parties of their obligation to scrupulously abide by the terms of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement, to ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the ground, and to extend all cooperation to UNDOF in the fulfilment of the tasks under its mandate.

21. UNDOF, in consultation with both parties, continued to review the situation in the area of separation in order to assess whether the conditions on the ground would permit the return to vacated positions in the area of separation. UNDOF conducted assessment visits and continuously monitored the prevailing security situation.

22. Since the resumption of patrolling on the Bravo side in February 2018, the UNDOF mechanized infantry company has conducted in excess of 50 protected patrols on the four designated routes in the northern and central parts of the areas of separation and limitation. It is envisaged that UNDOF will include protected patrols to observation posts 71 and 72 and to position 32 in the near future.

23. On 2 and 9 August, UNDOF conducted reconnaissance patrols to the Bravo gate in the area of separation. The purpose of those patrols was to ascertain the state of the Bravo and Charlie gates, and to specifically assess the condition of the structures at the Charlie gate, with a view to commencing the necessary reconstruction. UNDOF found that the structures at the Charlie gate had been damaged, and that the entire area around the gate required clearance of possible mines, unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war. UNDOF also determined that main supply road 7 from Camp Faouar to the Bravo gate was in sufficiently good condition for future use by UNDOF vehicles, in particular heavy vehicles.

24. During the reporting period, UNDOF made progress towards the limited return to Bravo side operations, in line with the phased UNDOF plan (see S/2018/550). Pursuant to phase 2 of the plan, UNDOF continued to develop the infrastructure of and improve the living conditions at Camp Faouar. UNDOF has continuously rehearsed exercises to ensure the security and defence of the Camp, and all deployed elements have been integrated into a cohesive and effective component, with clear command and control mechanisms.

25. Phase 2 of the UNDOF plan also includes the refurbishment of facilities and the security infrastructure of selected observation posts in the northern part of the area of separation, with a view to reoccupying observation posts 56, 71 and 72 in phase 3 of the incremental return to the Bravo side operations, conditions permitting. UNDOF continued to assess the security situation in the southern part of the area of separation and to ascertain the capabilities that would be appropriate for deployment in that area, conditions permitting. Observer Group Golan will not be deployed at observation posts in the area of separation on a permanent basis until such time as the security conditions permit, when adequate accommodation and appropriate force protection measures are in place.

26. The UNDOF Force Reserve Company commenced its phased re-deployment from the Alpha side to the Bravo side on 13 August, with the final group completing the move on 4 September. The UNDOF quick reaction force on the Alpha side achieved full operational capability on 6 August.

27. In accordance with the provisions of Council resolution 2426 (2018) and the UNDOF operational concept, UNDOF continued its efforts to deploy appropriate technology to ensure the safety and security of UNDOF personnel and equipment. A surveillance trailer remained deployed on the Alpha side at Camp Ziouani and position 22, while another was maintained at Camp Faouar. In addition, between 8 and 24 July, UNDOF deployed a surveillance trailer to position 80.

28. UNDOF continued to resupply its positions on Mount Hermon and at Camp Faouar from Damascus. UNDOF convoys between Damascus and the United Nations positions were conducted almost daily, using main supply route 7 and Salam highway, with an UNDOF security escort and accompanied by a liaison officer from the office of the Senior Syrian Arab Delegate. UNDOF continuously monitored the situation and took the necessary precautionary measures in planning and conducting its convoys. UNDOF continued to conduct and update its contingency planning for the reinforcement and evacuation of United Nations positions and observation posts on both the Alpha and Bravo sides, as well as in Damascus. UNDOF conducted regular rehearsals, exercises and training for identified contingencies. Risk mitigation measures, including force protection measures, continued to be developed at observation posts, positions and operational bases at Camp Ziouani and Camp Faouar.

29. As at 17 August 2018, UNDOF comprised 975 troops, including 38 women. Troops were deployed from Bhutan (3), Czechia (2), Ghana (12), Fiji (305), India (192), Ireland (136), Nepal (323) and the Netherlands (2). In addition, 70 military

observers from UNTSO Observer Group Golan, including 8 women, assisted UNDOF in carrying out its tasks.

III. Implementation of Security Council Resolution 338 (1973)

30. In its resolution 2426 (2018), the Security Council called upon the parties concerned to immediately implement its resolution 338 (1973). It decided to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a period of six months, until 31 December 2018, and requested the Secretary-General to report every 90 days on developments in the situation and the measures taken to implement resolution 338 (1973). The search for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, in particular the efforts made at various levels to implement resolution 338 (1973), was addressed in my report on the situation in the Middle East (A/73/322), submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 72/15 on Jerusalem and 72/16 on the Syrian Golan.

31. Since the discontinuation of indirect peace talks in December 2008, there have been no negotiations between the parties. The Syrian conflict further reduces the prospects for their resumption and for progress towards peace between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic. I look forward to a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic and the resumption of efforts towards a comprehensive, just and durable peace settlement, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions.

IV. Observations

32. I am deeply concerned by the military activity that occurred in the UNDOF area of operations during the reporting period. The heavy artillery and aerial bombardment on the Bravo side that spiked in July, along with the firing of missiles and rockets from the Alpha side into the area of separation on 3, 13 and 24 July, have jeopardized the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. I urge the parties to exercise maximum restraint at all times. I encourage the members of the Security Council to support efforts to sensitize both parties and regional stakeholders to the risks of escalation and the need to preserve the long-standing ceasefire between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic.

33. It remains critical that the parties maintain their liaison with UNDOF to prevent any escalation of the situation across the ceasefire line. All violations of the ceasefire line increase tensions between the signatories to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and undermine progress towards stability in the area.

34. I note the cessation of military activity of the Syrian armed forces and armed groups, and between various armed groups, including listed terrorist groups, in the UNDOF area of operations. Noting the continued presence of the Syrian armed forces in the area of separation, I reiterate that there should be no military forces in the area of separation other than those of UNDOF. I urge all parties to the Syrian conflict to cease military actions throughout the country and to remove all military equipment and personnel from the area of separation.

35. The Israel Defense Forces should refrain from firing across the ceasefire line. The continued presence of unauthorized weapons and equipment in the area of limitation on the Alpha side is of concern.

36. As UNDOF continues to consolidate its presence at Camp Faouar and maintains its efforts to intensify its operations in the area of separation, it remains critical that the safety and security of United Nations personnel be assured. The circumstances under which the troops and military observers are operating continue to require

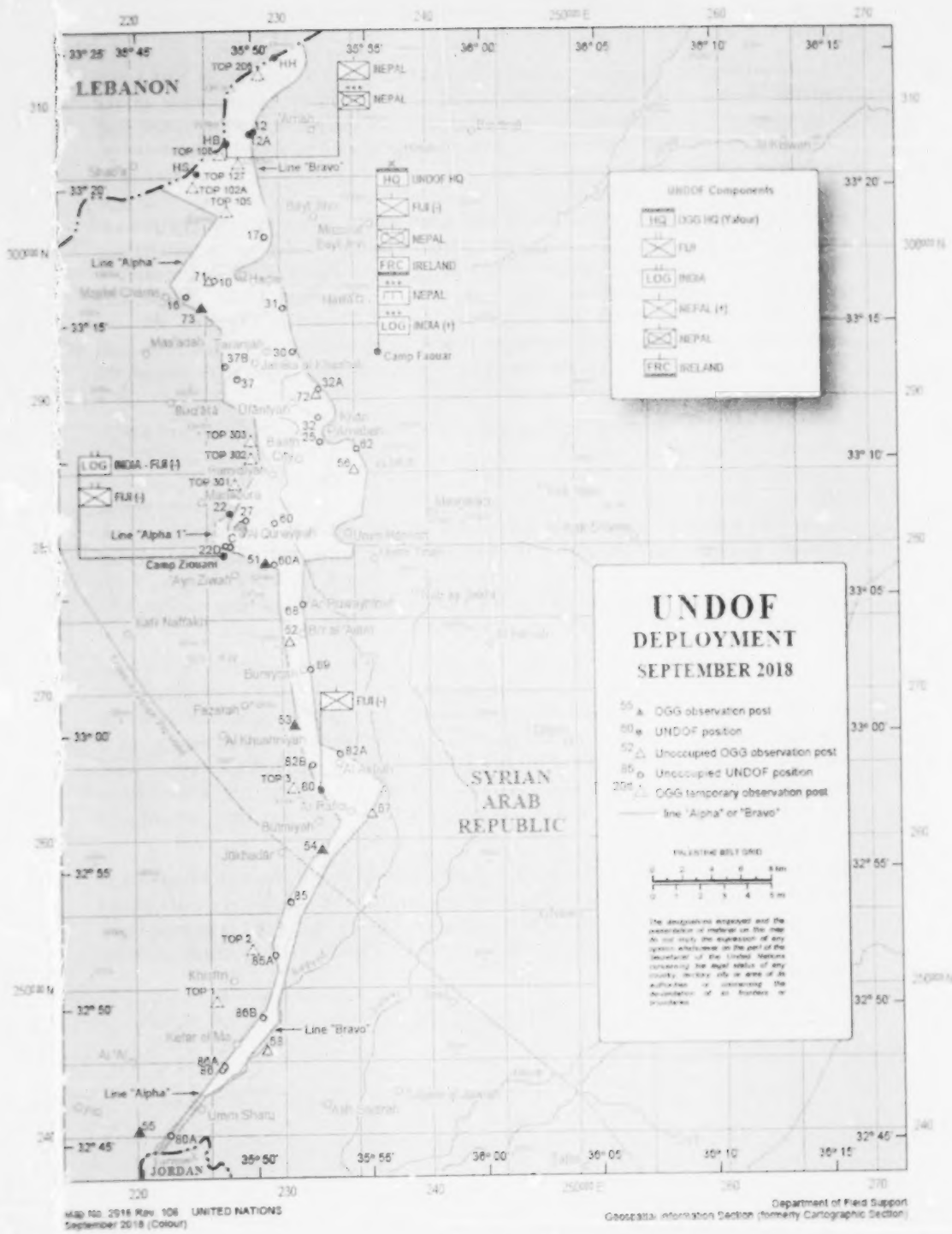
vigilance and risk mitigation measures. I renew my call upon the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to fulfil its primary responsibility for the safety and security of United Nations personnel on the Bravo side.

37. In calling for a return to vacated positions in the area of separation, both Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic have stated their continued commitment to the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and support for the presence of UNDOF. The full return of UNDOF to the area of separation remains a priority for the Mission, conditions permitting. I count on the continued cooperation of both parties to facilitate the advancement of the Mission's plans for an incremental return to operations and positions in the area of separation and to ensure that the Mission can implement its mandate. It is critical that UNDOF be able to deploy the technology and equipment necessary to enhance its observation of the area of separation and the ceasefire line and to augment force protection. In that regard, the support and cooperation of both Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic in ensuring that the deployment of the necessary technology and equipment occurs seamlessly and expeditiously are essential. At the same time, the parties must continue to support the enhancement of the liaison function of UNDOF.

38. It is equally important that the Security Council continue to bring to bear its influence on the parties concerned to ensure that UNDOF is accorded the ability to operate in a safe and secure manner and is allowed to operate freely in accordance with the Disengagement of Forces Agreement. The reopening of the regular Qunaytirah crossing point would benefit the ability of UNDOF to implement its mandate. The support of the parties in facilitating the clearance of mines, unexploded ordnance and remnants of war at the crossing is crucial. It is also necessary for UNDOF to continue to have at its disposal all means and resources necessary for it to return fully to the area of separation, conditions permitting.

39. The confidence and commitment of troop-contributing countries in UNDOF remain key factors in the Mission's ability to carry out its mandate. I continue to count on the support of troop-contributing countries as UNDOF proceeds with the implementation of its agreed plan to increase operations in the area of separation. I am grateful to the Governments of Bhutan, Czechia, Fiji, Ghana, India, Ireland, Nepal and the Netherlands for their contributions, commitment, resolve and consummate professionalism. I am also thankful to the Member States that have contributed military observers to UNTSO.

40. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the Head of Mission and Force Commander, Major General Francis Vib-Sanziri, and the military and civilian personnel serving under his leadership, who continue to perform the important tasks assigned to them by the Security Council with efficiency and commitment under challenging circumstances.


LEBANON
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
JORDAN
NEPAL
FIJI (-)
IRELAND
INDIA (+)
Camp Faouar
Line "Alpha"
Line "Alpha 1"
Line "Bravo"
Camp Ziouani
UNDOF Components
UNDOF
DEPLOYMENT
SEPTEMBER 2018
OGG observation post
UNDOF position
Unoccupied OGG observation post
Unoccupied UNDOF position
OGG temporary observation post
line "Alpha" or "Bravo"
Map No. 2916 Rev. 106 UNITED NATIONS
September 2018 (Colour)
Department of Field Support
Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)

United Nations S/2018/868

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 September 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 25 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the decisions of the extraordinary session of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism of Sudan and South Sudan, held in Addis Ababa on 24 September 2018 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Omer Dahab Fadl **Mohamed**
Permanent Representative

18-16018 (E) 011018

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Annex to the letter dated 25 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Decisions of the extraordinary session of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism

Addis Ababa, 24 September 2018

1. The Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) of Sudan and South Sudan was convened in an Extraordinary Session in Addis Ababa by the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP). The meeting was chaired by H.E. President Thabo Mbeki, Chairperson of the Panel. The delegation of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan was led by Gen. Kuol Manyang, the Minister of Defence, while the Government of Sudan (GoS) delegation was led by Lt. Gen. (Psc) Jamal Eldin Omer Mohamed, Assistant Minister of Defence. In attendance were representatives of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), the Office of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General to Sudan and South Sudan and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

2. On behalf of the Government of Sudan, Lt. Gen. Jamal Eldin Omer Mohamed welcomed the signing by the South Sudanese parties of the Revitalised Agreement of the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. He reiterated that the efforts of the JPSM were in line with the 2012 Cooperation Agreements whose objective was to lay a foundation for the creation of two viable neighbouring states at peace with each other. The SDBZ and other security arrangements, including the JBVMM and the UNISFA were an essential component of that Agreement. Sudan was committed to cooperating with UNISFA and work through the JBVMM to pursue sustainable peace through these instruments.

3. Minister Kuol Manyang, reported on the progress made in the implementation of the JPSM decisions since the last Extraordinary meeting of 5 March 2018. He noted the continuing improvements in relations between the two countries and their armies and pledged that this would continue. The nationals of the two States were moving freely between the two countries and some were taking up employment and undertaking economic activities among other things. The signing of the Revitalised Agreement of the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan ensures that all groups are now part of the peace process in South Sudan, and this will have a bearing on the operationalisation of the SDBZ.

4. The Minister outlined the challenges still facing the implementation of the JPSM decisions on the SDBZ, including the difficulty in allaying concerns of communities about the status of the international boundary, and called for prioritization of the work of the Joint Border Commission and the Joint Demarcation Committee to enable the international boundary to be clarified and demarcated.

5. The Meeting received a briefing from UNISFA on the developments since the last meeting of the JPSM in 5 March 2018. The report noted that UNISFA had received standing approval for all its flights. There was 100% timely approval of Aerial Monitoring Missions, and all cancellations were due exclusively to administrative and technical reasons. Ground Monitoring Missions were continuing. Challenges included difficult relations with some communities including in Gok Machar, Sumayah/Majak-woi in the 14 Mile Area. UNISFA had detected the presence of some forces within the SDBZ. There was a need to address the outstanding challenges and to enhance sensitisation efforts.

The meeting took the following Decisions:

1. In relation to the Benchmarks identified by the UN Security Council:

1.1. Benchmark 1

Issue: **Restriction of movement in Gok Machar**

Decision:

Government of South Sudan to establish a High-level Team by 1 October 2018, in coordination with the Ad-hoc Committee of the 14-Mile Area, to sensitize the communities to enable ground movement by UNISFA from Gok Machar into the SDBZ by 10 October 2018.

1.2. Benchmark 2

Issue: **Establishment of four Team Sites**

Decisions:

1) **Safahah/Kiir Adem**: To address the concerns of the communities, the team established under benchmark 1 will also undertake sensitization to enable the full establishment of the team site within the same timeframe.

2) **As Sumayah/Wierayen**: To address the concerns of the communities, the team established under Benchmark 1 will also carry out sensitization to enable the full establishment of the Team Site.

3) **Abu Qussa/Wunkur**: UNISFA to deploy team to establish Team Site in the agreed location by 10 October 2018.

1.3. Benchmark 3

Issues: 1) holding of two JPSM meetings;

2) redeployment of forces outside of the SDBZ

Decisions:

1) **JPSM Meeting**: Convene a regular JPSM meeting in Juba on 12 October 2018.

2) **Redeployment**: The parties agreed that the redeployment would take place from the following the locations by mid-November:

(a) SAF from Lafa Mayom

(b) SAF from Kilo 10 at Joda

(c) SPLA from Wierayen

(d) SPLA from Riankuel

1.4. Benchmark 4

Issue: Progress on the opening of the four Phase 1 border crossings.

Decisions:

1) The Parties confirmed that all 10 border crossings are open and safe

2) Each country to establish custom and migration offices

3) UNISFA to verify the functioning of border corridors and the free movement across the border

4) Sensitisation team established under Benchmark 1 to carry out activities in Kosti-El Renk in line with the recommendations of the AUBPTT

5) UNISFA to facilitate the opening of the Timsahah-Buram

1.5. Benchmark 5

Issues: (i) Two additional corridors to be identified; (ii) finalizing of plan for remaining corridors

Decisions:

1) Plan for remaining corridors to be presented to the next JPSM meeting on 12 October

2) Parties identified the two additional border crossings as: (i) Kosti-Renk-Nile crossing; (ii) Talodi-Tonja

1.6. Benchmark 6

Issue: Meetings of JBC and JDC to take relevant actions

Decision: The AUHIP will act on the matter

2. Full Operationalisation of the JBVMM

2.1 The Parties agreed to complete the operationalization of the JBVMM through the following actions:

(i) To open the Sector Headquarters in Buram and Renk

(ii) UNISFA to present a timetable for opening of the above Sector Headquarters, and the corresponding Team Sites, at the next meeting of the JPSM.

3. Recommitment to sustaining peaceful relations:

3.1 The Meeting welcomed the continued improvement in relations between the two States, and the role that Sudan has been playing in the mediation of the Revitalised Agreement of the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. The Parties welcomed, in particular, the continued free movement of persons, goods and services as well as transhumance between the two States, which is in line with the soft border provisions of the Agreement on Border Issues, and the Framework Agreement on Status of Nationals of the other State and pledged to continue to facilitate interactions between the peoples of the two States.

3.2. Both Parties pledged to continue nurturing their relations within the framework of the Cooperation Agreement, 2012.

4. Next Meeting

4.1 The next meeting of the JPSM (Ordinary) will be held in Juba on 12 October 2018.

Signed in Addis Ababa, this 24th day of September 2018

Hon. Gen. Kuol Manyang Juuk
Minister of Defence and Veterans' Affairs
Republic of South Sudan
JPSM Co-Chair

Hon. Lt. Gen. (*Psc*) Jamal Eldin Omer Mohamed
On behalf of the Minister for Defence
Republic of Sudan
JPSM acting Co-Chair

Witnessed by:
H.E. President Thabo Mvuyelwa Mbeki
Chairperson AUHIP

United Nations S/2018/869

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 September 2018

Original: English

Identical letters dated 26 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a list clarifying the numbers of civilians killed and injured because of terrorist attacks, including mortar shells and explosive devices, committed by terrorist armed groups against safe neighbourhoods in different Syrian cities and areas, during the period from 22 August to 21 September 2018.

Governorate	*Number of civilians killed*	*Number of kids killed (among the civilians)*	*Number of civilians injured*	*Number of kids injured (among the civilians)*
Damascus	0	0	2	1
Damascus suburb	0	0	1	1
Dar'a	9	5	27	12
Suwayda'	0	0	1	0
Homs	0	0	5	3
Hama	17	7	26	10
Tartus	0	0	0	0
Ladhiqiyah	0	0	4	0
Idlib	0	0	0	0
Aleppo	2	2	20	10
Dayr al-Zawr	5	2	9	3
Hasakah	0	0	0	0
Qunaytirah	0	0	1	0
Raqqah	0	0	0	0
Total	**33**	**16**	**96**	**40**

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter were circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

18-16015 (E) 270918

Please recycle

United Nations S/2018/870

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 September 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 26 September 2018 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a document of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, presenting its position on the recommendations contained in the twenty-second report (S/2018/705) of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team established pursuant to resolution 1526 (2004), which was submitted to the Committee in accordance with paragraph (a) of annex I to resolution 2368 (2017).

I should be grateful if the present letter and the position paper could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Kairat **Umarov**
Chair
Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities

18-16031 (E) 011018

Please recycle

Recommendations of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team contained in its twenty-second report

1. On 27 June 2018, the twenty-second report (S/2018/705) of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team was submitted to the Committee pursuant to paragraph (a) of annex I to Security Council resolution 2368 (2017). A table of recommendations based on the report was also circulated to the Committee on 2 July 2018; the Committee deliberated on the recommendations in informal consultations on 13 July 2018. The Committee expresses its gratitude to the Monitoring Team for the exemplary work undertaken in the fulfilment of its mandate.

2. Since December 2005, when it established the practice, the Committee has responded to each of the reports submitted to it by the Monitoring Team and brought to the attention of the Security Council and the public the Committee's position on the recommendations contained in those reports.

Position of the Committee on the recommendations contained in the twenty-second report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team

Recommendation to the Committee	*Position of the Committee*	*Status of implementation*
Impact assessment of Security Council resolution 2347 (2017)		
1. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States highlighting the usefulness of the red lists of the International Council of Museums as a tool for prima facie examination of cultural property by customs and law enforcement officers, as well as for their training in this discipline.	The Committee agreed that the Chair would write to Member States highlighting the usefulness of the red lists of the International Council of Museums as a tool for prima facie examination of cultural property by customs and law enforcement officers, as well as for their training in this discipline.	A note verbale (SCA/2/18 (20)) was dispatched to all Member States on 10 September 2018.
2. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States encouraging them to support the proposed amendments to chapter 97 of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, which are currently under examination by the World Customs Organization.	The Committee agreed that the Chair would write to Member States encouraging their delegates to the Harmonized System Committee and the Harmonized System Review Subcommittee of the World Customs Organization to support the proposed amendments to chapter 97 of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, which are currently under examination by the World Customs Organization. The Chair should note the opportunity for Member States to send letters supporting the proposal to the secretariat of the World Customs Organization for inclusion in the presentations for the November meeting.	A note verbale (SCA/2/18 (20)) was dispatched to all Member States on 10 September 2018.
Impact assessment of Security Council resolution 2388 (2017)		
3. The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States reminding them of the provisions of Security Council resolution 2388 (2017) and drawing their attention to the likely availability of increasing amounts of relevant information over time, as more returnees and relocators, including women, are processed in transit or on arrival at their destinations. Member States should be encouraged to be alert to the opportunity to gather this information in order to identify persons or entities who transfer funds to ISIL in connection with the exploitation and abuse of women and children for listing by the Committee.	The Committee agreed that the Chair would write to Member States reminding them of the provisions of Security Council resolution 2388 (2017) and drawing their attention to the likely availability of increasing amounts of relevant information over time, as more returnees and relocators, including women, are processed in transit or on arrival at their destinations. Member States should be encouraged to be alert to the opportunity to gather this information in order to identify persons or entities who transfer funds to ISIL in connection with the exploitation and abuse of women and children for listing by the Committee.	A note verbale (SCA/2/18 (20)) was dispatched to all Member States on 10 September 2018.

Recommendation to the Committee	Position of the Committee	Status of implementation
set freeze		
The Monitoring Team recommends that the Committee write to Member States to draw their attention to methods of terror financing likely to become increasingly prevalent as ISIL loses its last quasi-state streams of income; to highlight the risk of an increased global incidence of kidnapping for ransom, among other revenue-generating crimes and methods of financing; to encourage Member States to continue to exchange information and expertise in countering these; and to draw attention to the fact that paying ransoms or making political concessions to terrorist groups finances and assists their activities and incentivises further kidnappings.	The Committee agreed that the Chair should write to Member States to draw their attention to methods of terror financing likely to become increasingly prevalent as ISIL loses its last quasi-state streams of income; to highlight the increasing risk of kidnapping for ransom around the globe, among other revenue-generating crimes and methods of financing; to encourage Member States to continue to exchange information and expertise in countering these; and to recall Security Council resolution 2368 (2017), in which the Council underscored that ransom payments to ISIL, Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities continue to be one of the sources of income that supports their recruitment efforts, strengthens their operational capability to organize and carry out terrorist attacks and incentivizes future incidents of kidnapping for ransom.	A note verbale (SCA/2/18 (20)) was dispatched to all Member States on 10 September 2018.

United Nations S/2018/871

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 September 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 26 September 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to write to you in your capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of September 2018 to draw the Security Council's attention to the ongoing debate in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom with regard to a bill entitled "Asset-Freezing (Compensation) Bill". The purpose of the bill is to utilize the frozen Libyan assets in the United Kingdom to compensate victims of the Irish Republican Army. The House of Lords of the United Kingdom passed the bill, and the House of Commons scheduled a second reading in the House of Commons. Sponsors of the bill suggest that it would require that frozen Libyan assets in the United Kingdom will remain frozen after the United Nations lifts the sanctions until victims of attacks by the Irish Republican Army are compensated.

In this regard, I would like to inform you that the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord, the House of Representatives, the High State Council, the Foreign Ministry and eight Libyan political parties have issued separate formal statements expressing their grave concern about the ongoing debate in the House of Commons of the United Kingdom. They reject any legislation aimed at imposing restrictions on Libyan assets to secure compensation or for any other purposes. The statements urge the Parliament of the United Kingdom not to pass such a bill and urge the Government of the United Kingdom to formally oppose the bill, which, if passed, would place the Government of the United Kingdom in breach of its commitments under the Security Council resolutions.

To this end, I would like to underscore the following:

1. Libya has met requirements of Security Council resolution 731 (1992) and cooperated positively with the United Kingdom, as confirmed by the statement forwarded by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (S/1995/973, dated 20 November 1995), in which the Government of the United Kingdom expressed satisfaction with the cooperation of Libya. Furthermore, the former Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, Robin Cook, testified before the House of Commons, on 7 July 1999, that the Government of the United Kingdom in 1995 was "generally satisfied with Libya's response and the information it had provided on previous links with the Irish Republican Army" and "regarded the matter as closed", and he did not have a basis on which to seek to reopen it.

2. Security Council resolutions 1970 (2011), 1973 (2011) and 2009 (2011) have frozen assets of individuals and entities, including the Libyan Investment Authority,

and explicitly stated that it is the Council's intention to ensure that assets frozen pursuant to these resolutions shall at a later stage be made available to and for the benefit of the people of Libya.

3. The passing of such a bill is a clear violation of the related Security Council resolution and would place the Government of the United Kingdom in breach of its obligations under Security Council resolutions, especially given that the United Kingdom is a permanent member of the Security Council.

4. The bill does not rule out using the frozen assets to compensate the victims and in so doing would place the Government in breach of its obligations under Council of the European Union Decision (CFSP) 2015/1333 and Council Regulation (EU) 2016/44.

5. Therefore, by using the powers that would be granted by the bill, the United Kingdom would be in breach of its obligations under Security Council resolutions, European Union sanctions regulations and the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocol.

6. The bill, if passed, will constitute a precedent which will have a severe impact not only on the credibility of the United Kingdom in its international relationships, but also on its economy, future options for investors, and trust. Furthermore, it would be a dangerous precedent that will impact the sovereignty of all States and would undermine the whole international cooperation system, which is governed by legal, ethical and moral rules and trustworthiness.

The Government of National Accord is confident that the Government of the United Kingdom will uphold its responsibility to stop such a bill and will remain committed to the relevant Security Council resolutions as a permanent member of the Security Council.

The Government of National Accord will reserve the right to pursue all necessary means — politically, legally and economically — under international law and, at the same time, seeks the solidarity of all international community members to stop the establishment of such a dangerous precedent.

I kindly request that the present letter be published as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Elmahdi S. **Elmajerbi**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Prevention of armed conflict

The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine

Report of the International Court of Justice

Letter dated 26 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a note verbale dated 21 September 2018 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation concerning the termination of the Treaty between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 34, 67 and 76, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

18-16185 (E) 041018

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Annex to the letter dated 26 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and in light of the approaching end of the current 10-year period of effectiveness of the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership Between Ukraine and the Russian Federation (the "Treaty") has the honor to state the following.

«The strengthening of friendly relations, good-neighborliness, and mutually beneficial cooperation» between Ukraine and the Russian Federation - such purposes of the Treaty are described in its Preamble. As reflected in the first three articles of the Treaty, such friendly relations between the Parties can exist only when each treats the other as «equal and sovereign» (Article 1), respects the other's «territorial integrity» and «inviolability of the borders existing between them» (Article 2), and refrains from use of force, including economic or other means of pressure, and intervention in internal affairs (Article 3). The Treaty further recognizes that friendly relations are based on each Party's adherence to «good-faith performance of international obligations undertaken, as well as other universally recognized norms of international law» (Article 3).

These foundational principles — of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political and economic independence, and respect for international law — were incorporated into the Treaty to provide a basis for cooperation between Ukraine and the Russian Federation in various areas, including:

- Security: Under Article 4 and Articles 6 through 9, the Parties committed to cooperate on security and disarmament matters. In particular, they agreed specifically not to participate in hostile acts against each other, and not to allow their territories to be used to the detriment of the security of the other Party (Article 6). Further, under Article 33 of the Treaty, the Parties committed themselves to «combat ... terrorism in all its forms and manifestations»;

- Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Under Articles 10 through 12, each Party guarantees economic, social and cultural rights to the citizens of the other Party. The Parties agreed, that they would guarantee the citizens of the other Party «rights and freedoms on the same basis and to the same extent as it does its own citizens» (Article 10). They committed also to protect the rights of national minorities, including «the right of individuals who belong to national minorities to fully and effectively exercise their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and with full equality under the law» (Article 12);

- Trade and Economy: Under Articles 13 through 16, the Parties agreed to cooperate with one another to grow bilateral trade and their respective economies. In particular, the Parties agreed to «ensure favorable conditions for direct trade relations» (Article 14) and «ensure the mutual protection of their investments» (Article 15);

- Transportation and Energy: Under Articles 17, 20, 22 and 29 of the Treaty, the Parties agreed to cooperate in developing and maintaining transportation and energy infrastructure, including «devoting particular attention to the development of cooperation in ensuring the functioning of national fuel-and-energy complexes» (Article 20). They agreed also to guarantee «freedom of transit of persons, freight, and vehicles» (Article 17) and, in this regard, to «develop maritime shipping and use sea lanes, seaports and maritime facilities» in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov (Article 29);

- Natural Resources of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov: The Parties committed to working together to utilize «the recreational potential and natural resources of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov» (Article 29);
- Environment: Under Articles 25 and 29 of the Treaty, the Parties agreed to cooperate in the areas of environmental protection and improvement, as well as other related areas. In particular, the Parties agreed to «further develop comprehensive cooperation in saving and preserving the natural environment of the Azov-Black Sea Basin» (Article 29).

The Russian Federation has ignored the fundamental principles of the Treaty, including threatening and then brazenly violating the territorial integrity of Ukraine, committing armed aggression against Ukraine and applying military and economic pressure to interfere in internal affairs of Ukraine, thus violating both the principle of sovereign equality and the rights of Ukrainian citizens.

In such circumstances and in the absence of good faith towards peaceful settlement of disputes concerning Russia's numerous and significant breaches of the Treaty, the extension of the Treaty for the next decade (2019-2029) is fundamentally impossible.

The Russian Federation, despite all efforts of Ukraine and the world community, still ignores appeals to stop its internationally unlawful acts, which violate all fundamental provisions of the Treaty, including but not limited to Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 13, 17.

The Russian Federation refused to use the instruments of peaceful settlement of disputes, as provided by Article 7 of the Treaty and as required by Article 33 of the UN Charter (Note of MFA of Ukraine from 28 February 2014 №2774/2дснг), despite the fact that Ukraine through diplomatic channels (Note of MFA of Ukraine from 27 February 2014 №610/22-110-599) sent to the Russian Federation proposals to resort to them at the beginning of the unlawful use of force and the military aggression in the Spring of 2014.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine emphasizes, in accordance with Article 70 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, the termination of the Treaty does not affect the rights and obligations of the Russian Federation and Ukraine created under the Treaty prior to its termination.

Ukraine and the Russian Federation retain all their rights and obligations under the Treaty, created during its period of validity from 1 April 1999 through 31 March 2019. Ukraine continues to demand that the Russian Federation rectify its violations of the Treaty, respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, stop violations of the rights of Ukrainian citizens, as well as by provide full compensation for the damage caused by its violation of the Treaty.

Ukraine reaffirms its call on the Russian Federation to submit these and other fundamental outstanding disputes to the International Court of Justice.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine also emphasizes that the termination of the Treaty takes place without prejudice to the rights and obligations of the Parties under other effective bilateral treaties between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, as well as multilateral agreements to which Ukraine and the Russian Federation are Parties, and other norms and principles of international.

Ukraine confirms its obligations under such treaties, norms and principles, and demands that the Russian Federation faithfully execute its obligations under them.

The termination of the Treaty is without prejudice to the existing judicial and other processes for the peaceful settlement of disputes between Ukraine and the Russian Federation.

Taking into account all of the above and in accordance with Article 40 of the Treaty, the Ukrainian Side declares its wish to terminate the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership Between Ukraine and the Russian Federation from 01 April 2019.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation the assurances of its consideration.

Kyiv, «21» September 2018